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The LONDON MAGAZINE

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JME 1 NO. 7

Evelyn Waugh Major Ludovic's State Sword

William Sansom Dear Sir

Philip Toynbee The First Day

Malcolm Bradbury The Calendar of Modern Letters

Cyril Connolly Art Nouveau

Elizabeth Jennings Sequence in Hospital

Rex Warner Empson's God

James Brockway The Disturbing and the Disturbed

THEATRE John Whiting MUSIC Artur Schnabel ART Alan Ross

EDITED BY ALAN ROSS

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OCTOBER 1961 VOLUME 1 NUMBER 7

NEW SERIES

EDITED BY
ALAN ROSS

The London Magazine

Contents

ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL

Major Ludovic's State Sword	*Evelyn Waugh*	5
Dear Sir	*William Sansom*	13
Rose Under Glass	*Elizabeth Berridge*	23
The First Day	*Philip Toynbee*	30
The Calendar of Modern Letters	*Malcolm Bradbury*	37
Sequence in Hospital	*Elizabeth Jennings*	47
Art Nouveau	*Cyril Connolly*	50
Theatre: Luther	*John Whiting*	57
Music: My Student Days	*Artur Schnabel*	60

Selected Books:

Reviews by James Brockway 65, Rex Warner 81, Alan Ross 85, Francis Wyndham 90, Charles Osborne 93

Contributors 96

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CHATTO & WINDUS

EVELYN WAUGH

Major Ludovic's State Sword

In all the hosts of effigies that throng the aisles of Westminster Abbey one man only, and he a sailor, strikes a martial attitude. The men of the middle ages have sheathed their swords and composed their hands in prayer; the men of the age of reason have donned the toga. A Captain Montagu alone, in Flaxman's posthumous statue, firmly grips his hilt, and, because they had so many greater treasures to protect, the chapter left him to stand there throughout the war unencumbered by sandbags, gazing across the lower nave as he had gazed at the ships of revolutionary France in the waters off Ushant on the day of victory and death.

His name is not well remembered and his portrait, larger than life and portly for his years, has seldom attracted the notice of sightseers. It was not his sword but another which on Friday, October 29, 1943, drew the column of fours which slowly shuffled forward from Millbank, up Great College Street, under a scarred brick wall, on which during the hours of darkness in the preceding spring a zealous, arthritic communist had emblazoned the words, SECOND FRONT NOW, until they reached the door under the blasted and bombed west window. The people of England were long habituated to queues; some had joined the procession ignorant of its end—hoping perhaps for cigarettes or shoes—but most were in a mood of devotion. In the street few words were exchanged; no laughter.

The day was overcast, damp, misty and still. Winter overcoats had not yet appeared. Each member of the crowd carried a respirator—valueless now, the experts secretly admitted, against any gas the enemy was likely to employ, but still the badge of a people in arms. Women predominated; here and there a Serviceman—British, American, Polish, Dutch, French—displayed some pride of appearance; the civilians were shabby and grubby. Some, for it was lunch hour, munched 'Woolton Pies'; others sucked cigarettes made of the sweepings of canteen floors. Bombing had ceased for the time but the livery of the air-raid shelter remained the national dress. As they reached the abbey church, which many were entering for the first time in their lives, all fell

quite silent as though they were approaching a corpse lying in state.

The sword they had come to see stood upright between two candles, on a table counterfeiting an altar. Policemen guarded it on either side. It had been made at the King's command as a gift to 'the steel-hearted people of Stalingrad'. An octogenarian, who had made ceremonial swords for five sovereigns, rose from his bed to forge it; silver, gold, rock-crystal and enamel had gone to its embellishment. In this year of the Sten gun it was a notable weapon and was first exhibited as a feat of craftsmanship at Goldsmiths' Hall and at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Some few took comfort at this evidence that ancient skills survived behind the shoddy improvizations of the present. It was not thus that it affected the hearts of the people. Every day the wireless announced great Russian victories while the British advance in Italy was coming to a halt. The people were suffused with gratitude to their remote allies and they venerated the sword as the symbol of their own generous and spontaneous emotion.

The newspapers and the Ministry of Information caught on. *The Times* 'dropped into poetry':

. . . 'saw the Sword of Stalingrad,
Then bow'd down my head from the Light of it.
Spirit to my spirit, the Might of it
Silently whispered—O Mortal, Behold . . .
I am the Life of Stalingrad,
You and its people shall unite in me,
Men yet unborn, in the great Light in me
Triumphs shall sing when my Story is told.'

The gossip-writer of the *Daily Express* suggested it should be sent round the kingdom. Cardiff, Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh paid it secular honours in their Art Galleries and Guild Halls. Now, back from its tour, it reached its apotheosis, exposed for adoration hard by the shrine of St Edward the Confessor and the sacring place of the kings of England.

Guy Crouchback drove past the line of devotees on his way to luncheon. Unmoved by the popular enthusiasm for the triumphs of 'Joe' Stalin, who now qualified for the name of 'uncle', he was not tempted to join them in their piety. October 29, 1943, had another and more sombre significance for him. It was his fortieth birthday and to celebrate the occasion he had asked Jumbo Trotter to luncheon.

At the restaurant he was accosted by the ubiquitous Lieutenant Padfield of the United States Army.

'Did you go to see the sword of Stalingrad? I went when it was first on view at the Goldsmiths' Hall. I think it is a very lovely gesture of your king's but there was a feature no one could explain to me—the escutcheon on the scabbard will be upside down when it is worn on a baldric.'

'I don't suppose Stalin will wear it on a baldric.'

'Maybe not. But I was certainly surprised at your College of Arms passing it. Well I'll be seeing you around.'

'Around' was the right word.

Guy went on his way to the Headquarters of Hazardous Offensive Operations. Here there was a department he often visited when there was no work for him where lived three RAF sergeants in what was called 'the studio'. Here beaches were constructed in miniature, yards and yards of them, reproducing from air-photographs miles and miles of the coast of occupied Europe. The studio was full of tools and odd scraps of material, wood, metals, pastes, gums, pigments, feathers, fibres, plasters and oils, many of them strongly aromatic. The tone was egalitarian in an antiquated, folky way distantly derived from the disciples of William Morris. Two of the sergeants were mature craftsmen; one, much younger wore abundant golden curls such as the army would have cropped. He was addressed as 'Susie' and like his predecessors in the Arts and Crafts movement, professed communism.

In their ample spare time these ingenious men were building a model of the Royal Victorian Institute. Guy took every opportunity to visit them and admire their work as it daily grew to perfection. He paused there now.

'Been to see the Stalingrad sword?' Susie asked. 'Nice bit of work. But I reckon a few machine guns would be more to the point.'

He was addressing a tall, grey civilian dandy who stood nonchalently posed beside him, twirling a single eye-glass on its black cord. This was Sir Ralph Brompton, the diplomatic adviser to HOO HQ. He seemed a figure of obsolescent light comedy rather than of total war.

'It affords the People an opportunity for self-expression,' said Sir Ralph.

He was a retired ambassador who daily patrolled the building in the self-imposed task of 'political indoctrination', an old man with a mission, but in no hurry.

He had called on Guy and after a very few words had despaired of him as a sympathetic subject. He did not now disguise his annoyance at being found with Susie.

'I just dropped in,' he said, half to Guy, half to the senior sergeant, 'to see if you were getting the *Foreign Affairs Summary* regularly.'

'I don't know,' said the senior sergeant. 'Are we Sam?' He looked vaguely round the littered work-benches. 'We don't get bothered with much paper work here.'

'But you *should*,' said Sir Ralph. 'I make a special point of it being circulated to *all* ranks. Much devoted labour went into the last issue. You have to read between the lines sometimes. I'm at a disadvantage in saying quite all that needs saying in black and white. There is still a certain amount of prejudice to be cleared up—not in the highest quarters, of course, or among the People. But *half way down*,' he said, gazing at Guy through his single eyeglass, without animosity, seeing him with his back to a wall, facing a firing squad. 'One learns a certain amount of professional discretion in my absurd occupation. There will be no need for that after the war. Meanwhile one can only hint. I can tell you the main points: Tito's the friend, not Mihailovic. We're backing the wrong horse in Malaya. And in China too. Chiang is a collaborationist. We have proof. The only real resistance is in the northern provinces—Russian trained and Russian armed, of course. They are the men who are going to drive out the Japs. It's all in the *Summary* if you read it attentively. I'll see you get a copy. Don't forget this evening, Susie. I'm afraid I can't be there myself, but they are counting on you.'

He sauntered out twirling his eyeglass.

'What are you and the old geezer up to?' asked Sam.

'Party meetings,' said Susie.

'I know better things to do in the blackout than meetings.'

'So does the old geezer, it seems,' said the third sergeant.

'He's a bit of a bourgeois at heart for all his fine talk,' Susie admitted. All the time he spoke he was concentrating on his small lathe, turning tiny spiral columns with exquisite precision.

'You'll soon have that finished,' said Guy to the senior sergeant.

'Yes, barring interruptions. You can never tell when they'll come asking for more beaches. There isn't the same satisfaction in beaches.'

'They ought to have landed on them this summer,' said Susie. 'That's what was promised.'

'I didn't give no promises,' said Sam, busy with the fret-saw cutting little mahogany flagstones.

Guy left these happy, industrious men.

Thirty-seven years old, six foot two in height, upright, powerful, heavier than he had been in the Middle East and paler, with a hint of flabbiness in the cheeks, wearing service dress, a well-kept Sam Browne belt, the ribbon of the MM, and the badges of a Major in the Intelligence Corps; noticeable, if at all, for the pink-grey irises of his eyes; the man whom Hookforce had known as Corporal Major Ludovic paused reminiscently by the railings of St Margaret's, Westminster.

This was the place where he and others of his squadron had paraded twelve years and a few months ago, in King's Guard order as guard of honour for the wedding of one of their officers. Ludovic was a corporal then. The crowds had been enormous, less orderly and lighter of heart than those who now shuffled forward towards the Abbey, for the bride was a fashionable beauty and the bridegroom's name was familiar on advertisement hoardings and the labels of beer bottles.

They had lined the aisle; then while the register was being signed, had formed up along this path which led from the door to the motor car. Their finery had excited cries of admiration. As the organ sounded the first notes of the wedding march they had drawn their swords and held them in a posture for which no drill-book has a name, forming an arch over the wedded couple. The bride had smiled right and left looking up at each of them in the eyes, thanking them. The bridegroom held his top hat in his hand and greeted by name those of his squadron he recognized. Two manikins carried the train clothed at enormous cost in replicas of Ludovic's own uniform; then the bridesmaids, plumper and plainer than the bride but flowery in full June. Then they had lowered their swords to the 'carry'; a royal party had passed between them smiling also; then parents and after them a long stream of guests; scarcely visible under the peak of the helmet behind and all round them were reporters and photographers and a cheering, laughing London crowd.

It was after that wedding, in the tented yard behind a house in St James's Square (now demolished by a bomb), that Sir Ralph Brompton had first accosted Ludovic. The royal party sat in the ballroom on the first floor, where the young couple received their guests. A temporary wooden stair had been built from the ballroom balcony to the tent (for it was a rule that no member of the royal family should be in a room without an alternative egress) and the guests, after they had made their salutations, went below, leaving that still little pool of humble duty for the noisier celebrations under the canvas. Later, when they discussed the question, as they often did, neither Sir Ralph nor Ludovic was able to explain what distinguished the young corporal from his

fellows, except that he stood a little apart from them. He did not like beer and great jugs of special brew, made by the bridegroom's father for the occasion, were being pressed on the guard of honour, the tenants and foremen and old servants who segregated themselves in their own corner of the marquee. Sir Ralph, as tall as any trooper and almost as splendid in grey tail suit and full cravat, had joined this convivial, plebeian group and said: 'You're much better off with the ale. The champagne is poison,' and so had begun an association which developed richly.

Sir Ralph was then doing a spell at the Foreign Office. When the time came for him to go abroad on post, he arranged for Ludovic's release from the regiment, who were sorry to lose him; he had lately been promoted corporal of horse at an early age. Then had begun five years' life abroad in Sir Ralph's company, as 'valet' at the embassy, as 'secretary' when they travelled on leave. Sir Ralph discreetly attended to his protégé's education, lending him books on psychology which he relished and on Marxist economics which he found tedious; giving him tickets for concerts and the opera, leading him, when they were on holiday, through galleries and cathedrals.

The marriage did not last long. There was an unusually early divorce. Ludovic, as he now was, constituted the sole progeny of that union.

It was 5 o'clock. At 5.30 the Abbey had to be shut for the night. Already the police were turning away the extremity of the queue saying: 'You won't get in today. Come back tomorrow morning—early,' and the people obediently drifted into the dusk to join other queues elsewhere.

Major Ludovic went straight to the Abbey entrance, laid his blank oyster gaze on the policeman and raised his gloved hand to acknowledge a salute that had not been given.

'Ere, just a moment, sir, where are you going?'

'The—er—King's present to the—er—Russians—they tell me it's on show here.'

'Got to wait your turn. There's others before you, sir.'

Ludovic spoke with two voices. He had tried as an officer; now he reverted to the tones of the barrack-room. 'That's all right, cock. I'm here on duty same as yourself' and the puzzled man stood back and let him by.

Inside the Abbey it seemed already night. The windows gave no light. The two candles led the people forward, who, as they were admitted in twenties, broke their column of fours, advanced in a group and then fell into single file as they reached the sword. They knew no formal act of veneration. They

paused, gazed, breathed and passed on. Ludovic was the tallest of them. He could see the bright streak from over their heads. He held his cap and his cane behind his back and peered intently. He had a special interest there, but when he came to the sword and tried to linger he was pressed silently on, not jostled resentfully, but silently conscribed into that unseeing, inarticulate procession who were asserting their right to the fair share of everything which they believed the weapon symbolized. He had no time to study the detail. He glimpsed the keen edge, the sober ornament, the more luxurious scabbard and then was borne on and out. It was not five minutes before he found himself once more alone, in the deepening fog.

Ludovic had an appointment with Sir Ralph for 5.30. He had to meet by appointment in these days. They were no longer on the old easy terms, but Ludovic did not lose touch. In his altered and exalted status he did not look for money, but there were other uses to which their old association could be put. Whenever he came to London he let Sir Ralph know and they had tea together. Sir Ralph had other companions for dinner.

They met at their old place of assignation. Once Sir Ralph had a house in Hanover Terrace and his retreat in Ebury Street—rooms over a shop, which had something of the air of expensive undergraduate digs—had been a secret known to barely fifty men. Now these rooms were his home; he had moved the smaller pieces of his furniture there; but not many more people—fewer perhaps—knew the way there than in the old days.

Ludovic walked down Victoria Street, crossed the shapeless expanse at the bottom and reached the familiar doorstep at the same moment as his host. Sir Ralph opened the door and stood back for Ludovic to enter. He had never lacked devoted servants. 'Mrs Embury,' he called, 'Mrs Embury,' and his housekeeper appeared above them on the half-landing. She had known Ludovic in other days.

'Tea,' he said, handing her a little parcel, 'Lapsang Suchong—half a pound of it. Bartered in what strange eastern markets, I know not. But the genuine article. I have a friend at our headquarters who gets me some from time to time. We must go easy with it, Mrs Embury, but I think we might "brew up" for "the Major".'

They went upstairs and sat in the drawing-room.

'I went to the Abbey before I came here—to see the sword.'

'Yes, I suppose like everyone else you are coming to appreciate the Soviet achievement. You usen't to have much share in my "red" sympathies. We nearly had a tiff once, remember? about Spain.'

'There were Spaniards in the Middle East—proper bastards.' Ludovic stopped short remembering what he resolutely strove to forget. 'It wasn't anything to do with politics. That sword is the subject of this week's literary competition in *Time and Tide*—a sonnet. I thought if I went to see it, I might get some ideas.'

'Oh dear, don't tell Everard Spruce about that. I'm afraid he would look down his nose at literary competitions in *Time and Tide*.'

'I just like writing,' said Ludovic. 'In different ways about different things. Nothing wrong with that, I suppose?'

'No indeed. The literary instinct. But don't tell Everard. Did you get any ideas?'

'Not what I could use in a sonnet. But it set me thinking—about swords.'

'That wasn't quite their idea; not, as they say now, the object of the exercise. You were meant to think about tanks and bombers and the People's Army driving out the Nazis.'

'I thought of my sword,' said Ludovic stubbornly. 'Technically I suppose, it was a sabre. We called them "swords"—"state swords". Never saw it again after I left the regiment. They weren't reissued when we were recalled. Took a lot of looking after, a sword. Every now and then the armourer had them in and buffed them; ordinary days it was Bluebell and the chain-burnisher. Mustn't leave a spot on it. You could always tell a good officer. On a wet day he didn't give the order "Return swords" but "With drawn swords, prepare to dismount". You took it half way up the blade in your left hand and transferred to the near side of the withers. That way you didn't get water into the scabbard. Some officers didn't think of that; the good ones did.'

'Yes, yes, most picturesque,' said Sir Ralph. 'Not much bearing on the conditions at Stalingrad.'

Then Ludovic suddenly assumed his officer's voice and said: 'After all, it was the uniform first attracted you, don't you remember?'

Ludovic was not successful in the *Time and Tide* literary competition. His sonnet was not even commended. He studied the winning entry:

. . . 'Here lies the sword. Ah, but the work is rare,
Precious the symbol. Who has understood
How close the evil or how dread the good
Who scorns the vestures that the angels wear?'

He could make no sense of it. Was the second 'who' a relative pronoun with 'good' as its antecedent? He compared his own lucid sonnet:

'Stele of my past on which engravéd are
The pleadings of that long divorce of steel,
In which was stolen that directive star,
By which I sailed, expunged be. No spar,
No mast, no halyard, bowsprit, boom or keel
Survives my wreck . . .'

Perhaps, he reflected, the lines were not strictly appropriate to the occasion. He had failed to reflect the popular mood.

WILLIAM SANSOM

Dear Sir

Dear Sir,

With reference to her legs encased in sheerest nylon, she turned the left one over, knees together, parting the flow of shimmering buti-silk boudoir coat in three colours, angel-blue, love-grey and mutation, to expose a cream smooth thigh to Gerald's pulsating gaze. His breath came in sobs as with arms wide Sandra yet averted her lowered eyes, tempting him, so near Gerald so far, while the head-long scent of Shadowsweet No. 2 rose all around to madden his brain, and the long-player throbbed muted strains of Yours, Yours.

Yours faithfully,
Sandra (Marjorie) Lee

Her hands dropped from the typewriter keys and her eyelids, loaded with green grease, raised themselves to let water-wet eyes look through the window at white tiles all over the office well.

Beyond, where endlessly the range of grimed dairy-like bricks ended, a grey December sky flooded down cold light: inside, behind her, the grey suits of men bowed over grey letters, ledgers.

It was the end of another year.

'Grey skies grey as my eyes,' Sandra suddenly sang in her mind, 'snap out of it!'

Because, however long the year had been, it was going to be a long day today. It was Friday December the Twenty-third. It was the day of the Office Party. The afternoon would be a rout, a riot. Already it was absurd to call the office grey, for round each desk and in drawers everywhere there lay parcels and tissue-wrapped bottles, and where these touched a radiator the heat sent out festive crackle-sounds of crinkly paper, red and green, jolly-holly Christmas crackle.

Yet—would she, she Sandra, ever see this Party? Now her heart gulped again, right into her throat, as it had all morning, to think of what was most momentous: her boy, her man, her Bun asking her to throw up everything, to leave at lunch, to drive away with him and get married to him, that very day, or at least to face together her parents today and then start seeing registrars and things about a quick wedding soon after Christmas. Bun had to go and lay electric cables all over Sarawak. That was why.

And she was not sure. It had all boiled up and over too quick. How could a girl say Yes so suddenly? Especially to a man she knew so well, over so many years. Especially, yes, to a steady—so steady they had never even bothered to get engaged.

Quiet bell-sounds punctured the rubbery office air as typing and duplicating machines chattered to and fro: and underneath and away, like the pounding of engine-room pistons, a muffled thumping of deep motor traffic blotted up any edges of silence. A light smell arose from paper, ribbon-ink, pencils, lubricating oil and from the extraordinary metal presence, like the slow thick taste of tin on the tongue, of the filing cabinets.

And, moreover, she was already dated to lunch with Nevile Wrasse, with dark-eyed Nevile who would drive her in his low white car to a smart lunch in the powder-scented West End.

There indeed was a problem. And it was marked now or never, neck and crop, neck or nothing. Not that Nevile mattered. It was the Decision that mattered. And Bun would be ringing at eleven. If then she said Yes, she must leave at lunch and not come back. Goodbye to all, hello Sarawak.

Yet how to take the final step?

There was, at least, half-an-hour yet. Better to think? Better not to think?

She looked down at the paper beneath her, on which was typed, under a stamped letter-heading THE ALLASOL MISSION, LTD., simply: 'Dear Sir, With reference to' and the rest of the page mind-blank.

But then as she raised her hands to begin once again, she saw a purple ribbon-stain on her oyster index nail. Automatically the other hand reached down and took from the drawer a little bottle of nicotine-remover, fluffed some into cotton-wool—and then dropped a drop of remover down on to her lap. The wet drop stared up from among the many polka-dots that made up the pattern of her dress. 'Oh NO!' she said, and added, 'Oh no, *Sandra*!' as she foresaw the big pale rim with which this fierce stain-remover would stain her dress and began to worry: Will another spot matter among all these real spots, will it ever be seen? It had fallen on a nasty awkward place, though. She needed a mirror and rose to leave for what at Allasol they called the Red Hell—the Staff Powder Room.

She rose from her small square nest of dark wood desk, wire baskets, piled paper, and the big grey typewriter to stand, fleshy and exotic, against a wall of mud-green steel files. Her hair, dyed bright brown and piled into a strange sharp fashionable shape, her silk-seeming dress and stockings, her high shoes and low neck played a most female essence against the dry office furnitures. In the cold light shed from white tiles outside, make-up made a mask of her face, for each layer of unguent or powder intended for tender café-light became as individually marked as the painted stripes on the face of a celebrant savage. It was difficult in any light ever to know what her face was doing beneath this mask: it was so thick and static that only tears or smiling teeth could send forth recognizable signals.

She passed between old Miss Cook in her fussy, cardiganed corner and the desks of Mr Mansford and big Mr Tiny Hearst, who stood together conferring over some photographic enlargements spread out on Mansford's desk.

But she paused as an atmosphere of gossip rather than work invaded her sensibilities.

'It's nothing to do with us, is it old man?' said Mansford, a good-looking young man, darkly brilliant and piratical, who nevertheless was contentedly married and thus looked all wrong and wasted.

Big pink-and-white-faced Tiny Hearst lowered his pale porker's eyes and echoed Mansford's words, drawing back his head a few inches the better to survey the photographs: 'We're old enough to know better, aren't we old man?'

'In her birthday suit, eh?'

'In the buff.'

'And to think that the original of this, ahem, art study is now sitting large as life, one floor beneath us in the typing pool!'

'They have to strip to type down there? Didn't know the old pool was wet as that.'

Sandra (Marjorie) Lee leaned forward by Ralph Mansford to peep-bo at the photographs. They showed the back of a naked young woman, squatting so that her bottom should not show too much, and the outline of one breast showing round from the front, but with the nipple painted off. 'You mean that's Sue Blair, is it really?' she asked, eyelids working up and down. 'However could she? In the office, too.'

'In the Studio,' Mansford said. 'She went along with the PRO to take notes and the model didn't turn up so Sue volunteered.'

'No!'

'Yes.'

Tiny put in: 'Took off her thingummies there and then and click, it was all over. Painless and professional. They say she'd done it before.'

'Sue Blair's been done like that before?' said Sandra, a kind of hot envy rising through her first shock.

'Magazines, they say. Thumbies.'

'What?'

'What you thumb over when the tobacconist isn't looking.'

Sandra put a look of shock across her face, and raised her voice: 'Well of all the barefaced —'

The two men turned and looked at her very hard.

From elderly Miss Mavis Cook's corner, from among her 'little home' made up of a calendar of bluebells and a cardigan on a hangar and a big red tartan biscuit tin, a lightly laughing voice pealed to the rescue: 'Really, if the girl wants to make an exhibition of herself, then let her, say I. And after all, if she's got a lovely body . . . we've all got bodies, haven't we?'

There was an embarrassing silence.

'We-ell,' said Sandra, 'she looks kind of cold for Christmas. My, I must run!' and she had already taken six quick tight-skirted steps onwards to the powder room when there came a shout from a door among glass partitions behind.

'Marge!' a smart red-haired woman cooed at her. 'Here a second, can you?'

'Damn her,' thought Sandra, who had changed her name from Marjorie only a year before, and to whom the word Marge now cut like fingernails on glass. But she instantly smiled, 'Coming!' and tacked quickly over towards this Monica Naseby, who was H.J.'s personal assistant, and who had emphasized the forbidden name on purpose. Monica was thirty, and thus ripe enough to scorn any affectation in the young. 'Hell and hell and hell,' Sandra-Marge

thought, as she looked down quick again at the stain-remover spot, which was already drying—but all her teeth opened in sweetness: 'Sure Monny, what can I do you for?'

She passed within the glass partition which served as a protective vestibule to the closed polished doors of the directors' rooms beyond. 'Mr Deane,' said Miss Naseby pinning papers together offhand, 'said you had asked to leave early, before lunch. He says yes all right, only wanted a word with you first.'

'Oh—now?'

Monica now came smiling through official Miss Naseby. Very regular pearly teeth arrived among dimples strongly assuring benevolence, as, upon embracing you, a python might smile. 'Really, Marge, you shouldn't worry Mr Deane with staff details. He's got more than enough, especially as we're hurrying to clear the decks for the Party. Come to me next time, eh?'

Nothing showed through Sandra's mask but again smiling teeth—and what finally is a smile but a kind of bite, loving or not? 'Don't I know,' she agreed, 'but I was just with him, and I thought not to appear rude missing his Personal Message —'

'Of course, love,' said Monica to cut her short, and rose like a chic tube in her dark career suit to go and tap on H.J.'s door. Here and there the tube was slightly swollen, as if a woman inside was waiting to flower after hours.

Sandra looked down at her spot, and the thoughts pounded into an agonizing race. What was he asking her in for? Was it to receive her Personal Message now, as it were, personally? (The Personal Message was the way H.J. liked to think of the Christmas Bonus Packet, which he always delivered in person.) And would H.J. see her spot? No, at least not *that*—and she whisked up a sheet of blotting paper to hold it in place when the call came. And what—worst of all—was she going to say about going off early? Because she had asked about this only because of Bun and his idea to drive straight off—and she had asked it particularly casually, as a possibility, as a perhaps. But now was H.J. about to expand it into a concession? Was it to be Yes or No in the next two or three minutes? It seemed like Fate forcing her hand. But did she like Fate forcing her—unless she had already made up her own mind, when Fate became a different matter, more like a delicious helping hand itself?

Because if she went to lunch with Bun she would not only be missing the Party if not also the Personal Message, but missing as well what was much more important and fluttered and banged against her mind this morning like a cloud of big moths—missing Life. It was terribly plain from Bun's new stern look and from a kind of extension to his jaw, as if he were throttling on

a new collar-stud, that it was for Life this time. Marriage, it was. And that would be wonderful, it was where deeply and happily with Bun she wished to head. And Sarawak, perhaps, was wonderful too. But it would be all twice as wonderful if something had *happened* first. Or if were there time yet for *something* to happen. Something. Anything. An event in her life, a romance, an accident, a 'something' to look back upon. Something outrageous, something terrible, something exciting, something even just bad.

For life had been uneventful. The truth was that Sandra, despite her appearance, which differed little from how a whore might be thought to look, was a good girl. And she was already twenty-two years old. While one side of her sent a white Sandra willingly pure into her future husband's arms, another side deplored this. Should so much be sacrificed all at once? All the desires and dreams of her growing years, all she had tended so carefully in mirrors everywhere, all the Sandra she had made, inside and out? Marriage, they say, is an adventure. But it did not seem to have quite the line of other adventures. Desperately she wished for a past with which to face the future.

Then the door began to open—just as a big girl came whisking past in a glow of pink-washed cheeks and rose-fresh powder. Fine strong calves halted, sensibly-pleated skirt swirled to a stop as Jill Jenkins her desk-neighbour paused to whisper at Sandra's ear: 'Has Bun phoned yet?'

Sandra shook her head, and pointed a finger at the door. Jill smiled her huge fresh smile, tossed back chestnut curls and whispered: 'Who's a now-or-never girl? Why, Sandra Sarawak!' And swirled off humming the first bars of the 'Wedding March'.

'Now or never' drummed at her mind as she went forward to H.J.'s room, and whether it was the predicament itself or the predicament plus the spot on her dress, or other things as well, like the sudden strong daylight striking in from H.J.'s door and blinding her, and a ruck in the carpet that gave a tug at her heel that tugged right up to her belt—she suddenly flushed with quick anger: 'Why, it's wrong a man should lay down terms like that. Shouldn't he be on his knees asking? Who is this Bun? Where is this Sarawak?'

'Yes, Mr Deane?'

'Miss Lee? Yes.'

They were alone. Godfrey Deane, a big-built man whose initials H.J. stood for Honest Jack, a device of the staff born of the large twinkle he put into eyes to simulate friendliness, Godliness, even Cleanliness in the murky business of merchandizing—this big good-looking fifty-year-old leaned athletically back in his chair, arms wide on the chair-arms, all chest and tie, and twinkled.

'Can you keep a secret, Miss Lee?'

Holding her blotter casually in place, Sandra thought quickly: Say, cynically, 'I'm a woman, Mr Deane.' Say, jollily, 'Cross my heart, Mr Deane.' Say, poker-faced, 'What's it worth to you, mister?'

'A *secret*, Mr Deane?' she said.

A tired look of wear and tear washed the twinkle from Mr Deane's eye.

'I see I can trust you. It's just this,' he said, and upended a small packet with a significant finger, than let it drop as though worthless. 'It's the bonus. We've not had a bad year, but, quite frankly, it's not come up to expectations. We've all got to tighten our belts that much. I'm afraid this—which we offer you now with our best wishes for a Happy Christmas—is only half what you might usually expect.'

Now Sandra's make-up stood her in good stead, not a sign of disappointment showed through. And she managed to say, evenly: 'I'm only sorry for Allasol's sake, Mr Deane,' while Half-oh-God-Half wailed at the back of her quite honest concern.

But now Mr Deane was writing on the packet, and at the same time extending his free hand towards her stomach.

'Blotter,' he said, 'I've lost my ballpoint.'

Panicked, she drew it back. Then fearfully extended the blotting paper. It was awful. And the cold grey sunlight blinding her through the window.

'I've added—And a Happy New Year. I hope it will be, for all of us. I've great plans for expansion. You know, Miss Lee, when we first formed Allasol, it was to be called Allasol Beauty Products Ltd. But that did not seem enough. It had to be bigger—and finer. You know, The Allasol Group of Companies, The Allasol Organization, Allasol Initiatives. Something that had—well, call it class.'

He leaned even further back, staring vaguely at her stomach. A visionary blur clouded his eyes: 'And then I thought, the thought came to me, Miss Lee —The Allasol Mission! And so it was. And that's just what we are—a mission. we have a mission to perform for our public. And so if we all pull our weight—but I need say no more to *you*, Miss Lee, need I?' And back came the twinkle while his eye searched her up and down for one of the personal and friendly touches with which he believed the staff were welded to the firm's inmost fibre. 'That's a pretty dress you have on,' he said, and clamped his twinkle right on the spot itself, where now her hands were clasped. 'And that's oyster Sleek if I'm not mistaken! Good match.'

He had only seen Allasol's new polished grey varnish on her nails! God

bless Allasol. But he was continuing: 'When I said a "secret", I meant just don't tell anyone about the bonus for a moment. It's better coming from me, when I come round. I don't want to put too much of a damper on the Party. Advance information to you only because you're leaving early.'

And suddenly, looking at him there, the hard-wearing big man with his boney brow and strong black eyebrows, she noticed in that cold daylight that his hair was thinning in front, and she thought: The cares and worries of the poor man. And suddenly she said:

'No Mr Deane, I want to stay. I'm very sorry Allasol's in such straits. I'm staying right here to help make the Party go.'

A flush of loyalty coloured down on her neck below the white mask, which stayed white, so that for a moment she looked terribly pale, about to faint. But that was not the reason for a startled light in H.J.'s eye.

'Now don't be saying we're in straits, Miss Lee! That's a purely domestic matter. Within these four walls—you understand? It's just that for once we can't pass so much on. We're consolidating. And expanding.'

'I quite understand, Mr Deane,' she said firmly, and felt a grave welling of tears, as at an anthem.

'See you later then,' he said, and nodded as he picked up the photographs of Sue Blair's back. 'I've got to get these Shadowsweet displays decided before we . . . hm . . . hm . . .'

Deftly she turned and left, her chin high with pride. But once through the glass vestibule and into the paler world of the outer office her new loyalty remembered the old. She quailed, her heart gave its great gulp again.

'Oh what have I done? That's done Bun. I can't go early now.'

'Hi, Sandra, quick—it's your Bun,' Jill called from the telephone between their desks. 'I've been holding the fort—what've you two been doing in there, founding a family? No, not you Bun,' she said to the receiver. 'Private call too, quick!'

Dazed, with bridges burned, Sandra took up the telephone firmly and angrily:

'Sandra here. Bad news, Bun, I can't get away. No . . . it's too difficult. . . . Let nothing *what* stand in the way? Not at a moment like this? Well, Bun, there are moments and moments is all I can say. Mm . . . Mm . . . I know dear, and I'm terribly terribly sorry. Really I am. . . . Well if *that's* all you can say, you can ring right off. . . . No, I've *not* got the curse!'

She banged down the receiver—muttering 'Curse, *curse* it,' to cover that word and sucking her finger as if she had hurt it on the receiver.

The voice of Miss Cook came evenly across: 'Did Deane actually *ask* you to stay then dear?' But behind her glasses her eyes looked more than usually anxious.

'Not really, I volunteered because of the bo—' and then her lips snapped holding the secret back. To have forgotten in that short time! But here was another loyalty at stake—here she was against her fellow-workers, with the boss's secret! 'Because of the Party,' she almost shouted. 'Because I'd like to be here, with you all, after the year!' And she hurried away at last to the Powder Room, though this was no longer necessary, for round a few of the starry spots on her stomach a big white ring now shone, a strange new planetary phenomenon.

Jill Jenkins whirled up after her.

'Thank God at last,' Mansford swore, reaching for the free telephone.

He gave the number of a nearby hospital and asked whether there was any news yet? For Mrs Mansford was at that time in labour, and all the morning he had spent dully sharing his wife's agony along with the November figures of a cosmetic sales survey, angrily wishing to protect her from so cruel an attack from within, tenderly feeling for the sweet sudden defencelessness of women who thus on the brink of motherhood seemed more than ever to be just young girls, and at the same time fearfully suppressing other thoughts that doomily loomed: 'Will I bear it? The nappies, the prams, the rubber ducks? The school fees? What kind of a dark happiness is this?'

'Napoo,' he said brightly to Hearst as he rang off, 'Mafeking not yet relieved.'

Hearst popped his eyes from under their white lashes. He smiled a knowing, kindly, curly smile: 'Then perhaps we'd better have a—'

His hand reached down to where a bottle lay ready for the Party. But stopped. It came back to him about last year's party when old Merrydew had thrown the L—M file out of the window, said the President was passing and rated a paper welcome. Christ, what a shambles—and they were jiving like bloody Bacchantes all over the Typing Pool and Mansford had thrown up in Mavis Cook's waste paper basket, got it all in though, neat job.

No, better not start as early as this.

'I feel wretched,' Mansford muttered.

'The gentlemen,' Mavis Cook said, 'always have the worst of it. I don't suppose anyone has a rubber?'

In the terribly scarlet powder room, painted thus by a Time and Motion man to keep the staff from spending too much time there, and thus occasioning

the office pleasantry: 'No Time for a Motion', Sandra was dabbing her new ring with water.

'It's done for,' she said. 'Water's no good. So do I get another remover to remove the remover? Hell, what a morning.'

'You certainly gave Bun a flea in his ear,' Jill said, looking in the glass at her face all pink from the red walls, 'I look as if I'd sold my soul to the Devil.'

'I think I have,' Sandra murmured. 'I'm afraid I was all confused about something and then I had to take it out on poor Bun. Still, he needn't have been quite so sure of himself saying a thing like *that*.'

'Oh Sandra you can understand him—with the car ready and all your plans made?'

'It was always Bun's point,' Sandra said rubbing away, 'that we were to present the parents with the whole idea early today, to motor down now for lunch, so they could get to know about it easily over lunch, give them time. And then go ahead about the licence later in the afternoon.'

'Well he's right if you're going to get hitched before he flies off.'

'What he's *not* right about is giving the parents time. They'll agree like flashes. Good heavens, they're mad about giving their dear daughter her freedom. I think they go away for weekends specially to leave me the house free to turn into a one-girl brothel—so modern. Trouble is I never have.'

'Sandra!'

'No, I mean I'm simply not free enough in myself, Jill. Oh why do we know so much about ourselves nowadays?'

'I don't know, we know what we're doing, don't we?'

Sandra stood up and went to the glass too, so that two faces stared at each other with the red wall reflected behind. 'I'm not sure I *do* know what I'm doing. I mean, how can I want to marry Bun and then keep putting him off? Oh Lord, if only something would *happen*.'

Jill said: 'If he wants you, dear, he'll stick. You're in your rights to give him a chase. It's—what is it?—biologically correct.'

'Come again?'

'Oh well, it's usual. Though there's something unusual about you, my girl. Personally, I hae me doots.'

'About what?'

'Whether you're really in love with him.'

Sandra gave a weary Oh sound.

'How *can* you be so obtuse,' she said.

This last was a word she had found in a magazine article. The word had

startled her, and stuck. But she was not going to try to explain it now. 'Anyway,' she said, 'you're not taking the risk—oh my God look at the time, and I've got seven odourless old Fresh! stickers to finish up before we break.'

'You could come out of this place with red rims round your eyes—I've only got my Sleek to do. But will you go down with Bun later then?'

'I don't know.'

She took a last jabbing dab at her dress. 'I really just don't know.'

Jill-in-the-mirror then put her face forward to see at Sandra closer.

'Oh my pet,' she said, 'oh Sandra darling, you're crying. And I thought it was the red.'

'I'm not, I'm not,' Sandra sobbed, 'I'm not,' pursing her lips into a little pudding, and dabbing, dabbing, dabbing at her spot. 'But I do know *one* thing,' she said, coming to herself, 'I do know I can't go about like *this* all day. For two pins I'd go right out and get another dress. But for the two pins.'

And then she turned to her friend and her lips slowly opened in a big, sly smile:

'Jill,' she said. 'Times are hard. Can you keep a secret?'

ELIZABETH BERRIDGE

Rose Under Glass

What amazed and affronted Penelope Hinton most about her husband's death was that the fortune-teller had been right. Dragged reluctantly to a small upstairs den off Oxford Street by a talkative and desperate friend one Saturday morning, she had been told by a pale-eyed woman with a dusty bang that 'a sudden shock awaits you, dear', and did she not believe that loved ones preceded us to the Other Side? If not, she should prepare herself for what comfort the world could give, for she would need it.

Penelope had not mentioned this to Jamie, because she was ashamed of allowing herself to be taken to such a place with its dubious certificates round the walls, and its signed, yellowing photographs of obscure comedy actresses ('I never make a move without consulting Yella') frozen into sauciness and swathed in feathers. How dared that woman see so clearly the summer crowds streaming out of Lord's, the tucked evening paper under Jamie's arm, the nudging buses? It was a damnable intrusion into one's privacy, this stranger's

peephole glimpse of future grief and loss. And anyway, it seemed the woman's fault that Jamie had died so absurdly, putting an absent-minded foot in front of a lorry, the day's scores still buzzing in his head, and the third day's play to go. That last thought worried her long after the funeral was over. He would never know the result of the match. She had cut it out of the paper the following day, and noted that the promising young county player had made the century Jamie had prophesied for him. But—and here was the nagging unquietness—perhaps he *did* know. Perhaps even now, peering across from that Other Side Yella had talked about so glibly and familiarly, he was preparing to follow the season's play, unimpeded by having to buy tickets, able at last to glide—a not-body—into the Members' Stand without the benefit of that hideous tie.

* * *

The autumn was terrible.

It was the first time that loneliness came to mean more to her than a word read, an emotion other than intellectually felt. She seemed to be the walking embodiment of it, the smell of it was sharp on her and she developed an extra awareness. She could smell it on other people, like a secret illness, see the hollowness and fear behind walking, talking shapes, however clothed. A bare signal, an inarticulate call *we are of the same blood, thou and I*. It frightened her nearly into madness. It pursued her on buses, into shops, into comfortable restaurants where women sat immaculate behind coffee or ice cream, down shabby streets where old women or limping men tramped the hours away, staring at workmen or the cut-price goods in the sleazy windows. It dozed on park benches, feet on the gritty gravel. It was like a second layer to the London she had known all her life. Tall blocks of flats knew it, nurtured it, here it was locked behind walls, secured by doors; the muted scream of it doused by the radio or the whine of a lift. It was shut in behind the curtains of small houses in the suburbs; it hovered most mutely and fiercely in public places.

Of course, she had friends. But they were friends she and Jamie had shared. 'We shall have to ask another man to make up the number if Penelope comes,' she imagined them saying as they wrote her their kind invitations. She had done the same thing herself in similar circumstances, and she knew how difficult it was to dredge up the odd bachelor or widower from a narrowing, ageing circle of acquaintances; one seemed to make fewer friends as one grew older. For this reason she had refused to stay with Sybil Matthews, who lived in Flintshire and had always been a close friend. Sybil was a widow like herself,

although she never said the word 'widow' even in the privacy of her own mind. But Sybil was gay and bouncy, full of innocent flirtatious nonsense towards retired colonels; and not at all averse to the furtive pinch in the churchyard after morning service, the sherry-laden laugh of emancipated canons, blowing jokes and gallantries into her face at the safe and outwardly decorous get-togethers at agricultural shows and point-to-points.

'Going to Sybil's is like visiting tipsy Trollope-land,' Jamie had once said, as they drove home after spending one hectic Easter in Sybil's comical Victorian house with its façade like a public baths and veneered panels in the billiard room. Her grandfather had built it, and it suffered from too many after-thoughts as the succeeding generations made more money and cultivated curious tastes. The water-tower, for instance, with its games rooms for Sybil's twins—twins ran prolifically in the family—had been such an after-thought. Logically, there should have been two water-towers, for the family thought in pairs. There were two tennis courts, two summerhouses, two rowing boats; books, pictures, jigsaw puzzles, guns: everything was bought in duplicate, it was a family law.

Jamie had delighted in Sybil and her boys, and openly called the water-tower, which should have done something to stop the weir flooding, but never did, Matthews' Folly, waiting with ill-concealed patience for it to fall down. But it had outlived him and now it was a poor joke.

'Give me time,' Penelope had written to all these kind, well-meaning people. 'Perhaps when spring comes. . . .'

What she wanted to be able to say was 'When, if ever, I am a person in my own right again, I will be glad to see you. But it will have to be on different terms, for I will have changed—if I survive.' Such a statement was too melodramatic for them to take from her, she saw that, and was content to allow them their own interpretation of her neglect.

In the meantime she tried to learn how to live another person's life. The life of a woman alone, having to make her own decisions, form her own opinions. Completely bound up with Jamie as she had been for twenty-five years, it seemed absurd and pointless to go anywhere or do anything without him. She had always known what the poet meant by 'a singing rib within my dreaming side', and was now torn from that side, bare and cast away as a bone in a desert. Days lost their landmarks and only a spark of animal instinct drove her up from her bed, where on some black mornings she lay, a puppet in a puppet box, its master gone, to manipulate her own strings.

How did London cater for its drifting souls with time to fill in between

noon and dinner time? The very words 'dinner time' became archaic even as they formed in her own mind. Yet she held on to them, aware that they were like the markings on a post, an ancient stone pointing the way in a wasteland. For to a person alone, what difference did it make what time one got up, took breakfast, or simply didn't bother? Ate at midday or slept the day away? Night could be turned to day and who would care? Or even know? The terrible thing was that now she could do everything, anything at all; walk across the Alps, cycle to Samarkand, learn Judo or take a course in Russian . . . what did it matter? Luckily, at forty-four, civilized living had left its mark. She was not by nature rebellious and was not conscious of having missed anything in her life—on the contrary, it had been filled by one man and enriched and enlarged by mutual experience. Habit saved her in the early days and weeks so that on most mornings she got up and dressed on waking, however early that might be, laid her breakfast, ate it. Read the papers and letters and went out.

It was this going out that made her falter. She might have been in reality crossing the Sahara. So she planned her moves like a chess-player. To the British Museum one day, past the Roman heads, more alive in their chipped immortality than those who gazed indifferently at them, fresh in from the breezy Bloomsbury streets. To the Natural History Museum, a place one somehow never went to unless accompanied by a child, and into a lantern lecture on invertebrates at the dog-hour of three in the afternoon; the thick voice exactly matching the grey screen where worms or centipedes wriggled in their disgusting primitive blindness. Into numerous little art galleries where new pictures hung so hopefully in their brazen shriek for attention.

She felt nothing. Nothing at all. Nothing. Yet she must exist, for bus conductors asked for her fare. Nothing revived her. Not even the marvellous ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the tiny miracles of the jewelled watches and snuffboxes. Nor the compassion and depth of Rembrandt's paintings at the Wallace Collection, although the spaciousness and cold elegance of the house itself eased her, by enclosing her in its own mood of petrifaction.

She tried the parks. But Regent's Park was spoiled for her because she lived there anyway, overlooking the opulent houses that faced on to its green acres; it had always been a place for her and Jamie to walk in, whatever the season. But this year the smell of decay and the light blown smoke of the bonfires burning up the year's bounty, the distant sound of whistles as the keepers rounded up stragglers at the 'All Out' call, pursuing them on bicycles, the flushed faces of the lacrosse players over the tired yellow grass, merely

depressed her. Her first real feeling since Jamie's death was one of savage joy as she stood watching the gardeners dig up the faded dahlias which had blazed since last August. Those dahlias had been planted on the last day of June; she and Jamie on one of their walks had watched them go in and wordlessly noted the beginning of the end of summer. That was the trouble, of course, that was the core of her loneliness.

Everyone but Jamie needed words.

Penelope had always found communication difficult, being of a precise and agonizingly honest nature. It was sometimes impossible for her thoughts to filter through into words that were exact enough to please her, and it had not been until she met Jamie (on one of those marches earnest young people were always undertaking in the thirties, in this case Arms for Spain, behind a magnificently bearded Mr Gollancz) that she found someone who had instantly apprehended what she was trying to say. Jamie was so much in sympathy, he worked so exactly on the same wavelength, that he had no difficulty in flying over the stumbling words and alighted at once on what was valid and true. He caught every nuance of meaning she had despaired of transmitting.

One thing was bad about this. She became lazy by this total comprehension, and over the years had gradually acquired the habit of reticence, simply because it was not worth trying to reach other people anyway; no one mattered except Jamie. In effect, they carried on a special kind of communication which excluded other people. Even the birth of their children had not interrupted this lifelong conversion; politely enduring them, they had never been deeply touched by them, and now, with Jamie dead, Penelope still felt that she had nothing to say to her married daughters. Death she needed to discuss with Jamie, no one else.

Months passed, and she continued to be enclosed in this hard shell of unspoken emotion and undelivered comment like a rose drowned horribly in an inverted glass globe, or a bird frozen to its singing branch. Or a ghost in search of its own identity. Then, one day, in the sharp spring weather, she found herself walking along Oxford Street, hurrying, as she had not hurried for a very long time. The people who passed her were less real than the frozen figures of the dummies in the shops, dressed in the fashions of the coming year. A man passed, tall, thin, in an old mackintosh and involuntarily she called out to him. But as he turned an astonished, shocked face to her, she shook her head in apology and turned away. So many men in this desert of a town, one or two with his look, the set of shoulders, the swift walk, but never

Jamie. Where was he, then? Again the desperate desire to find out, the dangerous need to know. But how does one get to know—how does one discuss death with the dead? Was the so-called majesty and mystery men tacked on to the body's putrefaction only explainable by a priest—or by a woman with a dusty bang listening to voices no one else heard? Each confessional was an admission of the paucity of faith on the part of the one left behind who, by a quirk of fate, still possessed that elusive spark which drove the living body about its legitimate business in the material world.

What of that other world, then?

Penelope stood quite still on the pavement, then turned abruptly, nearly knocking over a large and voluble woman heading for the Corner House. With a feeling of acute self-distaste, but filled with a painful urgency, she found herself once again mounting those narrow lino-covered stairs which led up, secret as sin, to Yella's sanctuary out of the tidal roar of Oxford Street. It was the strangest meeting place she and Jamie had ever devised.

Yella obviously did not remember her. She was tired and had a cold. The crystal ball was covered with a pile of yellow knitting, and a half-drunk cup of tea stood on the little table. One client had just left, weeping, and the room held a stable chill.

She handed a pack of cards to Penelope, sniffing, and watched her trembling hands as she shuffled them, then picked out twenty-one.

'Ah,' she said, disinterestedly, 'you'll have to pull yourself together, dear. If I were you, I'd see a doctor. I see mine regularly, he keeps an eye on me, see? I shouldn't have all these colds.'

'You should put some draught-excluder round the window,' said Penelope, looking at the sloping ceiling, the ill-fitting panes.

'Practical, that's what you are. The cards say it too,' replied Yella without rancour. 'But you're letting a bereavement get you down, dear, and that'll never do. You've had a shock. Lost someone dear to you. Close, very close. Your husband? Well, he's near to you now, he's concerned about you. Wait. . . .' Yella laid her hands together and closed her eyes. Penelope watched her with helpless fascination and humiliation. There was a look of affront on Yella's face, as if she were hearing words she did not want to repeat. But all at once she said, with difficulty, 'I'm happy.' Then in a rush, 'No, I'm not. Go away, Penelope. Go away at once. I'll tell—you—later. You'll—know—later. Not now.'

Yella opened her eyes, breathing heavily, and looked at Penelope, glazed, unknowing. 'Did he come through, dear?' she asked at last, reaching for a

handkerchief. 'Did anything happen? Did he say he was happy? They usually do.'

Penelope had got to her feet, was looking keenly at the other woman. She gripped the table. 'Don't you know what you're saying, then?'

Yella picked up the crystal, gestured for her to sit down. 'Oh no, not always. I was right off that time. Sometimes I'm taken deeper than others.'

'Couldn't it be telepathy?'

The woman shrugged, 'You can call it what you like, dear,' she said. 'Now do you want a crystal reading or don't you?'

'No, thanks,' said Penelope. 'I'd rather work out the future for myself.'

She paid and left.

The name, her name, and the impatience in the voice. It was all there, all characteristic. *Go away, Penelope.* It was as if by her very obsession with him, her paralysing unhappiness, she was doing him harm. But it was all madness. How could Jamie speak to her out of that sleazy woman's mouth? But a tiny tick of conviction told her he had. His message, if message it could be called, was clear enough. *Leave me alone.* Let go. And the promise of *later.*

That word *later* did it. Whether it was Yella, or Jamie, or her own thought returned to her from another person's mouth, that was what she had to remember. *Now* was the time for the living, *later* the time for the dead, for explanations, for the immortal life or the final snuffing out.

All the same, she thought, as she caught a bus home, I've got to live in the *now*, whoever said it, Jamie, or that woman, or me. I've to try, God help me, and that's all I can do. It was a small enough crumb of comfort to filch from the desert of days, an added mystery—perhaps—to delve into. Wherever they were, the dead should be left in peace, for the living had work to do.

The First Day

I offer you first
An intimate contemplation of deadly old age,
Which is not included in the syllabus
Of any college in the wide belt of the prairies.
You steal a march on all the class of nineteen-ninety-eight,
And might, by the exercise of courtesy and diligence,
Major in geriatrics simply by attending to my words,
Observing my deportment.
Take it or leave it!
  No, I mean *take it*—
  In spite of your disgust at mottled claws,
  Bones almost protruding through the glassy flesh.
  The lizard opacity of eyes long-ago shuttered against faces and the light.
  I offer the anticipation of your own conclusion.
Wheel me beyond the sunlight;
To the grass verge there, under the leafy fruit-tree.
An apple? (Oh, Moriturus,
Don't search for meanings where no meaning's left!
Eve was for the dog-days when we sniffed and smirked
And was never expected here, in the garden of winds,
At the peroration.)
Set down your steel there, full in the sun,
And all my memories shall be refracted from your golden topknot.
Olaf shall be your name since once (when? where?)
I knew an Olaf such as you;
Another young golden cockerel from the world's fringes.
Unwilling listener held by the Mariner's eye,
Which glitters still behind the cataract,
And the barbed hooks of pity and curiosity.
Viking, contender, beginner,
Your ancestors sailed westward as our century began,
And from Wisconsin you've returned,
In duty, in mild contempt,
To this land of midnight sun and midday night.

No, no! I'll hear no more: my dying fancy is to have you as I wish,
My last creation.
A simple vessel inscribed with the barest identity;
Olaf of the prairies! Olaf of old Norway!
And I, to meet and hold you,
Have made my last northward journey through the *limes*
Of the fallen Empire, to the barbarous forests.
A garden of grass, as I foresaw;
The empty soil thin upon a rock-bed,
Holding no pottery or temples,
Nine-tiered cities, soldiers erect in lava,
Treasures of Greece or pride of Rome.
The deep wet valley below us, as I foresaw it,
A mountain forest to the east and west
And the white-shuttered house behind us.
Pale herrings steeped in vinegar for breakfast,
As I foresaw.
An uninhabitable country inhabited only
By the sleeply descendants of dead gods and warriors.
Nothing was ever made here until now.
Bear with me here, dear boy!
(Bear with me everywhere!)
Predestined meetings and conclusions
Offend the consequential minds of youngsters.
Was all your freedom in the Land of Freedom
Only to make you free for *this*—only to make you
An old man's final interlocutor?
His captive audience?
His Eckermann?
Or perhaps his long-forecast supplanter whose every step for twenty years
Has been a cracking of twigs in the sacred grove
As you crept and crept towards the doomed incumbent?
Meanwhile you plan to tell them on the campus
How you came by chance—oh, purely by pure chance—
On an ancient half-crazed Briton in the lonely *pension*.
Yet I shall show you that we are reciprocal
As tongue to ear,
As ear to tongue;

As knowledge is to strength
And strength to knowledge.
You are my eager heir and I your generous testator.
Without you these my last days of life and summer
Would be an evacuation in a silence:
Eighty-six years of wasted endurance and perception,
Velleities, passions, doubts and anticipations,
Memories false and true, learning and loss,
Recorded only by that improbable angel in the sky.
Without *my* presence you . . . oh, yes; oh, yes!
Would be down there in the valley where your eyes are roaming,
Casting your phantom downstream at the bend there.
But consider!
Fishing is better in an unfished mind.
Such hook-lipped cannibals are lurking in my depths;
Sun fish in the shallows;
Carp, eel and clouded mackerel;
Squids, pike, tuna, God knows what
Until you shall have used your skill to fetch them out of me.
(And other fish, perhaps, long dragged from the waters of life,
Long dead and rotted in the drought of dry air.
Avatars; spirit communicants,
Employing my fuddled mind for the addition
Of notes to the margins of their watery reflections.)
Even your boredom must be borne for this,
Since reciprocity is not an equipoise,
Not the immobility of scales equally weighted
But the ups and downs of children on a see-saw.
You'll rage, at times, against the slyness of my years
Which takes such cruel advantage of a young man's courtesy.
And then, at some quaver of my mind or tongue,
Your own young lionhead will shame you;
Pity possess you. Anger against your pity. Pity from anger.
And yet, before each nightfall,
Duty and need will take up their old positions,
One to each side of you,
Compelling your resignation to the stool and garden
And garrulous pantaloon declining.

Behind my hand, behind my lids I see
A fading white tracery of leaves on the black of the sky;
A stain of violet spreading like a fan;
Stars shooting from the dark; noses and lips which vanish as they come. . . .
  But now the first hard image forms on the right there:
  A pair of eyebrows!
  They rise above the nursery screen,
  Above Jack Horner and the Goose Girl,
  And above the constellation of the Jumping Cow.
  Genially bleached and tufted on the uprising pink of an unlined forehead.
  Above them I now restore a monkish fuzz; below them
  Two eyes of violent disparity.
  The glass eye gleams with a terrible unfocusing ferocity;
  The other, indulgent, sceptical, benignant,
  Winks me my comfort at the turning on of darkness.
Here's my loved Grandad in his kippered tweeds,
The first to appear for us,
The first to provide a text for counsels and conclusions.
Wise in his manner and appearance I can trust him
To reflect a wise light on his conjurer.
  A gun-butt folded
  Into the winter-bright cheek.
  Bang, bang on the morning sky
  Green above the marshes
  Black barrels pointing
  At long necks straining for the sea.
He grunts and creaks
Into an evening chair;
Imperial face
Above the tyrian of his coat.
  A horse-back emperor now
  Heavy in the stirrups.
  Old roan descendant
  Of battling palfreys
  Nods in the autumn of his race.
Head, laughter-shaken,
Over the cue
Nestles the bright green cloth.

Now the ripe nose twitches
At the ruby rim.
Lips smack the soil of Doure;
An eye glows red as the wine.
But here, and far the noblest image,
The king stands planted to receive the peacock from the wall behind him.
The folded tail bends low as the bird comes down on his shoulder,
And the long neck writhes for a balance.
The man's head turned like a bird's to the hovering bird-head.
Then a sharp little dip of that rosy pate, a signal
For the bright-eyes fan to be spread in the air behind them.
Festive creatures, old and male,
Engaged in an ancient pageant of man and beast:
Heraldic insignia.
Alas, alas for the fading of blood and feathers.

Or rather, damn my facile and misleading rhetoric, I would do better to say alas for all such stale tributes to received ideas and expected sentiments. It isn't my intention to join in the worship of my ancestors or to offer up regrets for a past which deserves from me a far more scrupulous attention and judgement.

So our capacities grow parched with the years! Cockcrow and coxcomb fade when the superannuated rooster no longer struts in the farm-yard! No cause for wailing there that I can see. For my part I've had the happy experience of appetite and capacity jogging downhill together in amicable harness, their noses more or less level.

Or so it seems, at any rate, as I talk to you now; and since I'm an old man, firmly resolved to exploit every privilege of age and exhaustion, I mean to speak to each moment exactly as I feel inclined I shall submit, in other words, to every passing influence of my mind or stomach. The result, no doubt, will be a contradictory narrative and many violent alternations of mood and outlook; but for the time being I speak with an easy belly, and consequently with a welcome equability of mind and temperament I advise you to bask in this mood while it lasts.

* * *

Now I show him in the shadow of Hercules;
Grandad possessive on the close-mown grass of the terrace,

And the leaden hero riven in the sky above him.
Each standing figure is jauntily inclined to port,
On club and ashplant,
But the man's the jauntier by his billycock and long cheroot.
A beardless King Edward
Overlooking ten thousand acres of his border earldom.
And if he were to cock his good eye to the right
There'd swim into its westward corner the pale grey liner of his house.
Palace of Ramillies!
Vanbrugh's domed glory in the northern hills!
Eh? Eh? The leveller's sniff?
The tribune's indignation?
A bas les Aristos?
Au poteau les Ci-devants?
But patience, boy, patience!
Splendour is one thing,
Virtue another.
Glory observed
Shows no humility,
No lovely face of labour,
Hope of man's brotherhood.
It lacks the good fellowship
Of Elks conventioned in Winnebago.
I speak of a glory
Long-ago trampled underfoot.
Don't waste your rage
On a glory already departed.
Below us, then, in the first of the seven valleys
The labouring reapers lean along their scythes.
Gold men observed,
With negligence but not in ignorance,
By the paternal eye of the fourteenth earl of Bulmer.
Green tweed breeches wrinkled at the knee;
Stout woollen columns of his country legs
Supporting the flaunted comfort of his belly.
Glassy and benign his double gaze,
And 'Dick,' he says, 'this sun's a penance.
'By your good leave we'll now turn home—

'Discuss some cooling liquers in the colonnade.'
Always he affected a certain mellow pomp of utterance,
Which I, to make you hear and smell him,
Have partly adopted for this grandparental opening.
Call me ape or parrot if you choose:
I call myself a rare magician,
Prospere of the forests, conjuring
So many long-silenced voices, and faces long-ago melted from the bone.
My voice shall speak like a wand and wave you
A thousand scents and whispers of what you call history.
(I call it life. I call it all.)
It must have been the era of that Hall of Mirrors
Where statesmen, victorious and defeated,
Met in the dignified equality of morning-coats.
Returning officers
Put on the bitter faces of neglected heroes,
And I, *our* hero, was a five years old, being born
At the very moment of the old world's ending.
As I first squealed for breath the helmetted Uhlans
Rode up the further slope of the wooded valleys.
Poilus opposed them in the scarlet breeches of Sedan, and
A continent of Ruritanias fell there.
Kings in epaulettes;
A lady or a monk behind the throne;
Three emperors still, and still
A sultan dying in a toe of Europe.

MALCOLM BRADBURY

The Calendar of Modern Letters

A Review in Retrospect

The three great literary reviews of the 1920s were *The Criterion*, *The Adelphi* and *The Calendar of Modern Letters*. Of these, the last-mentioned was in many ways much the best, yet it is certainly the least remembered. In 1933 Dr F. R. Leavis edited a selection from its pages, entitled *Towards Standards of Criticism*; he remarked, in his introduction, that the review had commanded the services of 'half a dozen really distinguished critics, each one better than any that finds frequent employment in existing periodicals' and he compared the review with *The Criterion*, remarking on its superior liveliness and its greater critical excellence. Moreover, there was in the founding, in 1932, of *Scrutiny* a strong and conscious debt to *The Calendar*, and perhaps it was the sense of the gap left by the demise of the paper that stirred *Scrutiny* into life. When *The Calendar* died there was left no periodical concerned for the moral and cultural enrichment of literature and none devoted to the exposition of serious critical principles. *The Criterion*, while the most serious and intelligent of contemporary journals, did not seem to the editors of *Scrutiny* to be performing the service required of a literary periodical at this time, and indeed that review never consolidated the distinguished statements on critical matters which Eliot had contributed to its pages early in its career. Thus *The Calendar*, which appeared between March 1925 and July 1927, was able to spread its influence much more widely than its present lack of reputation would suggest. It had much to do with the growth of the modern movement in criticism.

It is, perhaps, the development of criticism that forms the most visible advance that has been made in the pages of the twentieth-century literary periodical. By the beginning of the century the play of criticism as a serious discipline that had prevailed in the reviews and magazines of the early nineteenth century had almost disappeared. 'Time is ripe for the forging of a weapon of criticism, and for the emphatic assertion of literary standards,' declared Harold Monro in the first number of *The Poetry Review* in January 1912, and elsewhere in the same issue of the same periodical the point was made again:

> Criticism is always with us, yet it has achieved no consistent method by which the true artist can be distinguished from the false with any reliability . . . no standard of taste has yet proved sufficiently comprehensive to essay correctly the merit of a new poet and relegate him, as the critics still futilely attempt to do, to a fitting rank and station among his peers.

These comments, by Arthur K. Sabin, now seem dated; they seem so not because they no longer apply but because they prescribe, with such freshness, the attempt. Nowadays there is no lack of emphatic assertions of literary standards, and there are enough 'consistent methods' and 'comprehensive standards of taste' to require critical study themselves.

But the criticism of the early years of the century was not, by and large, disposed to treat such problems, or to talk of scientific approaches to criticism; it was all a matter of taste. Some had it and some didn't; this was the implication. It was towards the end of the Great War that signs of development appeared. *The Egoist* began to print criticism and, more importantly at the time, discussion of criticism by Eliot and Pound; *The Athenaeum*, in a final burst of glory under the editorship of John Middleton Murry, presented its readers with a succession of book reviews and articles on literature by many of the best minds of the time. With the foundation of reviews like *The Criterion* and *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, which not only criticized but submitted to searching examination the positions from which critical standpoints were made, the critical revival was established, and by 1932 it was possible for a review, *Scrutiny*, to appear whose main concern was the revaluation of the whole body of English literature from a central carefully presented critical viewpoint, which had developed under the stimulus of the critical gains of Eliot, Pound, Murry, Richards and the group of *Calendar* critics.

By 1920, the old literary establishment had been more or less ousted by the younger generation that had been coming into prominence since about 1910. Lawrence, Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, Norman Douglas, Wyndham Lewis, Middleton Murry and many others had established themselves over this period; and in 1924 there appeared in print T. E. Hulme's posthumous volume of essays, *Speculations*, which consolidated many ideas which had been active among writers over the previous two decades. In *The Criterion* (XVI, 65) for July 1937, T. S. Eliot remarked, in one of his 'Commentaries':

> The period which may be said to have begun about 1910 had its own critical requirements which were not those of a general assessment of the literatures of the past. What was needed was a critical activity to revise

creative writing, to introduce new material and new technique from other countries and other times. The accomplishment of the Imagist movement in verse seems to me, in retrospect, to have been critical rather than creative; and as criticism, very important.

But, he adds, the period after the war seems to him one of less lively interest in the problems of creative writing, one more concerned with esthetics in general, and with psychology. 'For this period, the psychological subtleties of Mr I. A. Richards, and the more general and increasingly political aesthetics of Mr Read seem to provide what is desired.'

The catch-word of the post-war period was Hulme's word, 'classical', with its distrust of the metaphysical attitude and the infinite view. *The Criterion*, *The Calendar of Modern Letters* and *Scrutiny* were all classical in tone, opposed to the Romanticism of Murry's *The Adelphi* and the Dionysianism of Jack Lindsay's *London Aphrodite*. For *The Calendar*, the word 'classicism' had a specific context—'the characteristics of a healthy criticism' wrote Bertram Higgins 'are invariably "classic", tending towards an ever greater rigidity of principle, organizations more explicit, and the canalization of the wide, shallow stream of taste'. But it was not classicism as the *Criterion* meant it; the same critic complained that in Eliot's review 'neo-classicism' was being used as a repressive instrument of literary criticism, in which religious and ethical preoccupations held too much place. Criticism in *The Calendar* was more carefully poised, but geared always toward some general critical agreement, some implied consent. This was a period concerned to clarify and define; a 'period of consolidation' after the establishment of the modern movement at the beginning of the century. It was a period concerned to establish a tradition and to develop a sound relationship with other arts and sciences; it was concerned too with the development of what Eliot called 'the European mind' —a whole, wide-ranging cultural responsibility. And this extension of interests paved the way for the political interests of the writers of the 1930s.

II

The Calendar of Modern Letters first appeared in March 1925 as a monthly literary review. Its editor was Edgell Rickword; and Douglas Garman, and later Bertram Higgins, was its assistant editor. It published twelve numbers in monthly form and then, with the issue for April 1926, it became a quarterly, increasing its price by one shilling to half a crown. In this form it continued until it ended its short life with volume four, number two, dated July 1927.

During that short period of existence, it published some of the best criticism to appear in any literary review since the decline of the great politico-literary reviews of the nineteenth century. Moreover, it was criticism informed by theory; on the strength of a very small number of articles, clearer formulation of critical ideas was made available to that small body of readers which the review reached (its circulation, according to Edgell Rickword, began at 7-8,000 and dropped over the first year to 2-3,000; it then became a quarterly and its circulation dropped to 1,000).

The circumstances of its foundation, as Edgell Rickword recollected them for me, were these: the paper was the project of a group of young writers engaged in freelance writing in London. Rickword and Bertram Higgins, both poets who had been publishing in different literary magazines for a few years, had met at Oxford between 1919 and 1921; Douglas Garman was down from Cambridge. They agreed on a dissatisfaction with the current literary scene, particularly as represented by *The Criterion*, which was not achieving the critical precision one might have hoped for in a review edited by one of the most important modern critics; they formulated *The Calendar*, and since one of Garman's sisters was married to Ernest Wishart, of the publishing house of Wishart, whom Garman had known at Cambridge, it was with his aid and support brought to realization.

It began with rigorous standards and, even when at the end of its life it seemed it might continue by foregoing some of its strictness, it preferred to fail with its intentions uncompromised. In its last number a statement, entitled 'Valediction Forbidding Mourning', suggests what those intentions were:

> The most natural step for a review to take, if it wishes to survive, is to adopt a 'political' attitude (one, that is, which implies a tendency to judge by expediency) and, though we realize that such an attitude may be almost essential to the achievement of a sound economic status, we cannot consider it as less than an abuse of function. For, in taking such a step, the freedom to exercise an independent judgement on contemporary work will be lost—not in so gross a sense as by commercial obligation, but by the more subtle and more obnoxious distortions required for the continued support of one's own platform. One can have little respect for the periodical which flaunts a pretension to philosophical righteousness and yet makes as many blunders with regard to the actual works of poetry or literature before it as the most unenlightened of its Georgian predecessors.

The value of a review, the article went on, must be judged by its attitude to the

living literature of the time, which includes such works of the past as can be absorbed into the contemporary sensibility. A magazine with such standards should be able to draw, in its more regular contributors, on a homogeneity of view—but a vital homogeneity and not 'the placid acceptance of a body of dogma or prejudices of one superior mind (legitimate only to itself) by some unindividualized members of the *intelligentzia*'. The consensus of *The Calendar* was vital enough, and it seems to have been contemporary also, since many of the opinions expressed passed into critical lore. On the other hand, however, this final editorial did admit a suspicion that its own synthesis had not been in every respect adequate, and it explained that it was partly because of this suspicion that the review was ceasing to function:

> There comes a moment in the creation of a work of art when a new conception interposes itself and makes further revision impossible. A review has quite different functions from a work of art but the parallel may serve to explain the unwillingness of those most closely associated with *The Calendar* to continue it in its present form. . . .

What this new conception was was never made clear, though the appearance of one of the editors in *The Left Review* in due course may be something of an explanation.

That *The Calendar* was assertive enough about 'standards of criticism' may be gathered from this editorial tone, and some of its aims as a periodical may be clarified by a review it gave to *The New Criterion*—as *The Criterion* was at this period called—in February 1926, in which the question of an organizing principle for a magazine is debated—'not even the bulkiest review can be boundlessly eclectic, and as soon as the element of choice is introduced the question of a principle or a programme becomes paramount'. The reviewer remarks of *The Criterion* that Mr Eliot's 'colours' are 'very faintly painted in' and identifies his position with the intellectualist reaction against 'the intuitionalist debauch'. Bertram Higgins later elaborated the point by remarking that Eliot's 'neo-classicism' was the literary version of a reactionary Latin philosophy, neo-Thomism, which was adapted into a repressive instrument of criticism, whose main aspects were a 'verbal sobriety which disguised its positivism, its calm and socialized demeanour in the midst of the revolutionary concepts by which we are surrounded, and its genuine but exaggerated docility to the world of learning'. *The Calendar* went in for a fresher and more pragmatic style, advancing its standards warily and in action. It announced in its first issue:

> We lay down no programme as to *The Calendar's performance*, nor

> prophecy as to its character, since these things cannot interest our readers till they have a tangible existence, and then we shall be ready to join our own criticism with theirs. A conviction of spontaneous growth (or growth which seems spontaneous to the watching mind) and unpolicied expression, is as near as we come to any public challenge or editorial doctrine. . . .

It aimed to be of value to those readers who 'wish to keep in touch with the literature which reflects the spirit of the present day', and it promised a series of critical articles entitled 'Scrutinies' which would 'examine the reputations of certain writers who are the object of somewhat indiscriminate admiration'.

The cageyness about standards didn't mean that the paper could claim none, as was evident when the series of 'Scrutinies' began. The series (which is reprinted with revision in the first of two volumes of *Scrutinies: Critical Essays* (edited by Edgell Rickword) (London, 1928)) is perhaps the main achievement of the review; it demonstrated, by the use of close critical analysis and with a higher skill in exegesis than had been commonly found up to now in any critical paper, positive literary deficiencies in works that had up to the time been held in high esteem. The articles were the first full scale attempt for many years to achieve by close and exacting criticism a scrupulous and considered evaluation of a work of art. The series gave *Scrutiny* its name and something of its method, and may be compared with the series in *Scrutiny* called 'Revaluations', which went on to examine reputations even more soundly established, and to address itself to the task of reconsidering the whole tradition of English literature. *The Calendar* was concerned primarily with the main figures of twentieth-century literature as they appeared at that time. With the rise of Eliot, Pound and the survivors of the Imagist movement, a number of poets and novelists of the earliest part of the century had been challenged. But unlike many magazines intent upon establishing a new era, it did not dismiss easily, working through its argument by close and exacting analysis. Thus the first of the series, an examination by Edgell Rickword of Sir James Barrie, noted 'an essential dramatic deficiency in [Barrie's] failure to separate his figures from his own emotional attitude towards them, a failure to complete the objectification of feeling which is the condition of art', an observation we would take for granted today but which was far from being familiar in 1925. Rickword's final conclusions elaborate his standard:

> At the end of the play, comedy or tragedy, if it is what we call successful, the level of desirable emotion has been heightened in those characters with whom the writer has decided that we shall identify our sympathies; others are inevitably the poorer. Barrie's peculiar trick, and that which

> prevents one from receiving any genuine stimulation from his plays, is a confusion of emotional perspective: by this means, emotions or loss and deprivation are made equivalent in value to those of fruition. . . .

This is practical criticism, concerned with technicalities, and concerned with solving artistic problems about design of works of art and the relations of parts to wholes. However, there is also a moral note struck, a willingness to challenge an artist's whole view of life, as when Douglas Garman, in the second of the series, speaks, in discussing Walter de la Mare, of 'the falsity of the values which he supports'. In the third, Bertram Higgins, considering the poetry of John Masefield, hits a note rather like Rickword's, analysing

> the emotional intention which, in all imperfect poetry, perceptibly accompanies the aesthetic achievement. The careless reader is only too likely to mistake the first for the second, and in Masefield this game of substitution assumes the proportions of downright bluff. . . .

C. H. Rickword, in the fifth of the series, pointed out that Bernard Shaw was rather an evangelist than a serious writer; and he pointed out that the artistic consequence of his belief in, and use of, the Life Force was that his plays 'far from attempting a reconciliation of life in the classical manner, are purely romantic flights from reality'. These analyses represent the standpoint of the review; they involve a clear idea of the full dramatic organization of the play, or the artistic organization of the novel, and an awareness of the traits which emasculate the general effect, in terms of failures to answer structural problems thrown up by a work of this kind. The method might be described as Aristotelian, since it presupposes that each work throws up its own rules and probabilities as it advances, and that offences against these expectations are failures in working. There is also the moral observation, always rooted closely in the literary judgement; when Bertram Higgins picks out, in the work of Walter de la Mare, certain lines that 'approximate to the effect he intends but are almost nonsense', he shows the technique at its best—precise and exacting, with an awareness of the effect of the whole work on its parts and the effect of the writer's emotional attitude toward his material.

Outside this series *The Calendar* printed a number of articles of high critical importance. There were studies of Poe, James Joyce and—tackling another field ready for criticism, criticism itself—Kenneth Burke. Robert Graves and Laura Riding wrote on anthologies. In an important article, 'The Re-Creation of Poetry' (*Calendar* I, 3, May 1925), Edgell Rickword addressed the problem of analysing the sources of the poetic emotion, observing that 'a poem must,

at some point or other, release, enable to flow back to the level of active life, the emotions caught up from life and pent in the aesthetic reservoir', a view that raises evident critical consequences. Perhaps, from the historical point of view, an even more important article was John Crowe Ransom's essay, 'Thoughts on Poetic Discontent' (*Calendar* I, 6, August 1925), one of the earliest salvoes of the American 'new criticism'. Ransom addressed himself to considering irony as a form of poetic control—'Irony may be regarded as the ultimate mode of great minds—it presupposes the others.' Another important issue, the relation of a writer to his society, was aired profoundly by Edwin Muir in an essay on 'The Zeit-Geist' (*Calendar* II, 8, October 1925); Muir argued that the power most solidly obnoxious to the artist is not the public but the intelligentsia. It is the calibre of his resistance to the values and standards presented there that give an artist's work its quality, and the *zeitgeist* nowadays not only encourages that resistance but also 'gives him a new inspiration, once the resistance has been vitally pierced'. Wyndham Lewis was another important contributor, appearing several times; of particular interest in his argument in 'The Dithyrambic Spectator' (*Calendar* I, 2, April 1925 and *Calendar* I, 3, May 1925) where he puts the case (which reappears in his *The Diabolical Principle* (1931)) that the Arts today exist where the need for them is absent, and they are perpetuated for their own sake. D. H. Lawrence —who like Lewis is in no way part of the 'programme' of the review (his work was obtained through an agent) but who shows the calibre of its content—appeared several times with reviews and essays, including the essay 'Morality and the Novel'.

In this way, and gradually, the review built up a body of opinion, centred around Edgell Rickword, his cousin C. H. Rickword, Bertram Higgins and Douglas Garman, but widening out to include and support Lewis, Lawrence and Edwin Muir, which had a coherent sense to it, a conviction about literature as a field worthy of close exegetical study and yet open to larger issues about its social background and its moral content. Perhaps the best example of the spirit, and the practical success, of the review's thinking and its effect upon those who took the opportunity of the running debate it offered is to be found in two discussions by C. H. Rickword of the criticism of fiction. The occasion of the first discussion was Elizabeth Drew's book, *The Modern Novel*, which C. H. Rickword reviewed (*Calendar* III, 2, July 1926) and which gave him the chance to observe that the critical terminology we had been applying to novels was unreal and dangerous. He gave as an example the singling out of 'character' as a part of the novel:

> . . . whereas rhythm [in poetry] corresponds to an actual excitement in the reader's mind that can be traced to its source in the means employed, character corresponds to nothing so definite. Rhythm is a property of words, character a product that needs analysis before a satisfactory account of its effect can be given in terms of its constituents, and a product, moreover, that invites extra-literary scrutiny. Such scrutiny is fatal to criticism, for, though it may be that the critic's ultimate concern is with the conception of life (the 'values') of which the novel is a vehicle, yet he is only so concerned in so far as that conception is made active through art.

Critics tend moreover to regard character 'as a portrait of an imagined human being' and to prefer the writer who provides the deeper illusion. But, though Raskolnikov is 'deeper' than Tom Jones, in that more of his interior is directly exposed, he is a figure of different and not great significance. Character is merely the term by which the reader alludes to 'the pseudo-objective image he composes of his responses to the author's verbal arrangements'; and once this image has been composed it can be criticized from many angles and regarded for its political, social or religious significance, as though it possessed actual objectivity. This article is further developed in the next issue of *The Calendar*, when under the title of 'A Note on Fiction' (*Calendar* III, 3, October 1926), C. H. Rickword postulates a more 'organic' approach to fiction. The form of a novel only exists as a balance of response on the part of the reader. 'Only as precipitates from the memory are plot or character tenable; yet only in solution have either any emotional valency.' Such effects are technical devices, effects produced by the novelist; the techniques of the novel are just as symphonic as the technique of the drama and depend upon the dynamic devices of articulation and control of narrative tempo. Thus plot and character exist in solution. Modern opinion has inclined to the view, says Rickword, that plot be determined by, or arise out of, character. It is, he declares, evident however that character arises out of narrative. Further, novels in which character does not seem to dominate give aesthetic satisfaction and one has to look for this by noting a common quality in all great works of literature:

> It is a unity among the events, a progressive rhythm that includes and reconciles each separate rhythm. As manifested in the novel, it resolves, when analysed, chiefly into character and plot in a secondary, schematic sense—qualities that are purely fictitious. Neither is an active element in the whole work in the way that melody and harmony are elements in a piece of music. Perhaps it would be less ambiguous to designate this basic, poetic quality by some such term as rhythm or development; on the other

hand, plot or story do indicate its nature—that it is primarily a sequence of events developing in accordance with an inner necessity.

The recognition of this inner necessity (which Rickword uses much as Aristotle uses the notion of plot or myth) constitutes the recognition of value—and it springs ultimately from the writer's conception of life and the adequacy of his vehicle in presenting that conception.

The article is clearly a seminal one not only for *The Calendar* but for modern criticism generally, both in England and the United States, where the paper circulated. Many modern attitudes toward the criticism of fiction are concentrated in it. There is the assumption that novels are 'wholes', unified conceptions; that they are not just life rendered on the page but verbal constructs with their own laws and their own ways of producing effects on the reader; and that the quality of the author's conception of life plays a substantial part in his invention. While, clearly, there *are* novels invented in terms of that conception of 'plot' and 'character' that Rickword challenges, our reading is richer if we acknowledge that inventions in the novel do usually work to a pattern like the one Rickword describes.

The Calendar's record in creative work is also impressive, though, for obvious reasons, it could not always uphold the standards set by the criticism. It felt a responsibility to do justice to writers of promise who deserved the encouragement of publication and it sought to be of value to those readers who wished to keep in touch 'with literature which reflects the spirit of the present age'. The review had in fact no reason to be modest on this account; the standard was very high indeed. The opening numbers serialized D. H. Lawrence's story 'The Princess', and there were stories from Pirandello, A. E. Coppard, Liam O'Flaherty, Leonid Leonov, William Gerhardi, Stephen Hudson, Douglas Garman and others. Chekov's comedy *The Wood Demon* was serialized. The poetry came from Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, Edgell Rickword, Edmund Blunden, Bertram Higgins, and others. There were, too, critical essays which lay rather outside the general theory of the review and are yet of real importance—such essays as E. M. Forster's on 'Anonymity', Samuel Hoare's on Rimbaud and Edwin Muir's on *Ulysses*. One aspect of the review deserves particular attention—it was among the earliest papers to draw attention to the younger American poets and critics who were coming into prominence at this time. Thus there is John Crowe Ransom's essay on irony, and Gorham B. Munson's study of the criticism of Kenneth Burke. In addition the work of three important young American poets—John Crowe Ransom, Hart Crane and Allen Tate—appeared in its pages.

It is strange, considering its record and its historical importance, that *The Calendar* has not been more widely remembered and, one might add, imitated. There is still room for a review of its sort—eclectic yet with a high critical sophistication and exigence—at the present time. Its blood brothers are in fact American reviews like *The Kenyon Review*; and it is interesting to note that the review did have a strong impact in America, and is still, it seems, better remembered there. Nonetheless, there have always been a few critics and writers who remembered the paper with gratitude. To some minds the paper was over-austere; thus H. P. Collins, reviewing the second volume of *Scrutinies*, spoke of a group of critics, mostly unknown, 'who possess a detachment and capacity for subtle differentiation and analysis which would have been incomprehensible a dozen years ago' together with 'a new degree of sophistication more formidable than the old 'superiority' of the ultra-artistic, a sophistication rather bloodless and probably deplorable, but arising from a mature, if not a deep, culture' (*Criterion* X, 41, July 1931). He was worried by its intellectualism—'at once the apotheosis of Bloomsbury and the dissolvent of Bloomsbury'—and the fact that its criticism was not creative, not concerned even with the society in which art grows. Today we are not so apt to find intellectuality so worrying, and a fresh look at *The Calendar* would show it to be surprisingly modern and enduring.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Sequence in Hospital

PAIN

At my wits' end
And all resources gone, I lie here,
All of my body tense to the touch of fear,
And my mind,

Muffled now as if the nerves
Refused any longer to let thoughts form,
Is no longer a safe retreat, a tidy home,
No longer serves

My body's demands or shields
With fine words, as it once would daily,
My storehouse of dread. Now, slowly,
My heart, hand, whole body yield

To fear. Bed, ward, window begin
To lose their solidity. Faces no longer
Look kind or needed; yet I still fight the stronger
Terror—oblivion—the needle thrusts in.

THE WARD

One with the photographs of grandchildren,
Another with discussion of disease,

Another with the memory of her garden,
Another with her marriage—all of these

Keep death at bay by building round their illness
A past they never honoured at the time.

The sun streams through the window, the earth heaves
Gently for this new season. Blossoms climb

Out in the healthy world where no one thinks
Of pain. Nor would these patients wish them to;

The great preservers here are little things—
The dream last night, a photograph, a view.

AFTER AN OPERATION

What to say first? I learnt I was afraid,
Not frightened in the way that I had been

When wideawake and well. I simply mean
Fear became absolute and I became
Subject to it; it beckoned, I obeyed.

Fear which before had been particular,
Attached to this or that scene, word, event,
Here became general. Past, future meant
Nothing. Only the present moment bore
This huge, vague fear, this wish for nothing more.

Yet life still stirred and nerves themselves became
Like shoots which hurt while growing, sensitive
To find not death but further ways to live.
And now I'm convalescent, fear can claim
No general power. Yet I am not the same.

THE VISITORS

They visit me and I attempt to keep
A social smile upon my face. Even here
Some ceremony is required, no deep
Relationship, simply a way to clear
    Emotion to one side; the fear
I felt last night is buried in drugged sleep.

They come and all their kindness makes me want
To cry (they say the sick weep easily).
When they have gone I shall be limp and faint,
My heart will thump and stumble crazily;
    Yet through my illness I can see
One wish stand clear no pain, no fear can taint.

Your absence has been stronger than all pain
And I am glad to find that when most weak
Always my mind returned to you again.
Through all the noisy nights when, harsh awake,
    I longed for day and light to break—
In that sick desert, you were life, were rain.

Art Nouveau

'Lady Alice, Lady Louise
Between the wash of the tumbling seas
We are ready to sing, if so you please;
So lay your long hands on the keys . . .
Alice the Queen and Louise the Queen
Two damozels, wearing purple and green . . .'

Now read it again, this time visualizing the two sea-girt queens, their apparel and their furnishings. We are in the thrilling eighteen-seventies, just before the aesthetic break-through, and the lines are from 'the Blue Closet' by William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, who believed that the common man could be saved from ugliness and spiritual death by surrounding himself with simple things made by conscientious craftsmen or by making them himself: 'What business have we with art at all unless we can share it? . . . Real art must be made by the people and for the people, as a happiness for the maker and user. . . . That talk of inspiration is sheer nonsense, there is no such thing: it is a mere matter of craftsmanship.'

'A very pre-Raphaelite friend of mine came to me one day and said, apropos of his having designed a very Early English chair, "After all, if one has anything to say one might as well put it into a chair".' (Richard le Gallienne, from 'The Yellow Book' 1894-7.) Oh dear—what has happened? For this cannot be the chair 'such as Barbarossa might have sat in' that William Morris set out to build. The socialism of the 1880s has gone and *fin-de-siecle* self-consciousness has set in. The chair le Gallienne's friend designed might have looked something like Charles Voysey's. This chair, with its rush seat, has indeed something 'Early English' about it; it remains part of the tradition. However, the chair of Voysey's young admirer, Charles Mackintosh, designed a year later, is original, like nothing else. It is Art Nouveau! Simple, functional, yet dignified; nervous, joyous and, like everything he did, vertical. And yet the parabolic, pierced ovoid at the summit and the way the uprights are carried past it, the relative width of splats and stretchers, give it a look of Picasso at the top and of Mondrian at the bottom; the two directions, one might say, in which Art Nouveau forked. The Glasgow School of Art,

for whom this throne was intended, was sitting on a volcano.

As always with a successful Art Nouveau object, it appears unique of its kind, an isolated Friday's footprint, and we are all the more surprised to find that similar artefacts are at that moment cropping up in many capitals. The style with which it has most affinities, the Rococo, presents only one major problem: did it originate in Italy or France? But the origins of Art Nouveau are much harder to track down, for it seems to have erupted from many parallel centres of similarity-in-diversity. One moment it is not there and then suddenly, from about 1899, the pastel shades and seductive contours of this false dawn are visible everywhere.

But despite its brevity, it is a truly European movement, and on the grand scale, for there is not only Art Nouveau painting, sculpture and industrial design, there is also present 'L'Art maitresse' an Art Nouveau architecture (whereas there is little Rococo and still less Surrealist architecture). 'The major monuments of that architecture at its best had qualities not seen before or since,' writes Henry Russell Hitchcock, and Dali puts forward a modest claim: 'I believe I was the first in 1929 to consider—without a flicker of humour—the liberating architecture of Art Nouveau as the most original and extraordinary phenomenon in the history of art' (Minotaure, 1933).

Here I should like to make an important point. We all owe an enormous debt to Professor Nikolaus Pevsner, particularly where Art Nouveau is concerned. In 1931 he was writing on the architects who originated the modern movement, in 1936 he produced his invaluable *Pioneers of Modern Design* (enlarged and reprinted in 1948) which describes the movement with affection and respect, clears up its history and traces its influence. But in order to make it even more respectable he writes (and this is constantly repeated by others) that both Morris's Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau have the same functions, they are 'transitional between Historicism and the Modern Movement'. Consequently the justification of Art Nouveau is that it prepared the way for the modern movement, and that what did not seem to anticipate this, for example Gaudi's work and especially the unfinished church of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, was abandoned as a blind turning. I think it is more correct to see the style as complete in itself, an unattainable end no doubt, but one having very little to do with modern art as we now know it. Then when we read a phrase like 'the worst excesses of Art Nouveau' we know it refers to the good Art Nouveau which cannot be assimilated, just as the 'worst excesses of the Rococo' meant the Rococo which did not slide imperceptibly into Neo-Classicism. It is to the honour of Loos, Gropius, Mies van de Rohe

that, coming though they did on the heels of Art Nouveau, they took practically nothing from it; and it is to them we owe our world.

But, what *is* Art Nouveau, that short-lived offspring of the conflict in our grandparents' souls between puritanical functionalism and decadent rococo, whose symbol combined the long, straight stalk and curvilinear bell of the lily? Let us call it a syndrome—a group of symptoms which, found together, constitute 'that strange decorative disease known as Art Nouveau' (Walter Crane). They are: (a) A revolutionary simplicity in design (an end to fussy Victorian shoddiness). (b) The wavy line or plant arabesque (sometimes violent). (c) Plastic decorative flatness (painters become decorators under the influence of Japanese prints). (d) Symbolism (or Art for Art's sake combined with *fin-de-siecle* pessimism).

When all these are found together a reaction is produced, occasionally referred to as 'counter-Art-Nouveau' where the curvilinear is abandoned for the rectilinear.

The work of certain English graphic artists is considered the precursor of all Art Nouveau, and Professor Pevsner, as well as everyone since, makes much of a book-cover by Mackmurdo for *Wren's City Churches*, 1883, as the first indisputably Art Nouveau object. Yet no one has pointed out how totally inappropriate it is for the subject matter. In fact it is Blake's conception of the unity between a poem, its illustrations and its calligraphy which is the real jumping off place for Art Nouveau and which leads on inexorably to the nine copies, bound for as many moods, which Dorian Gray possessed of Huysmans's *A Rebours* and to the exquisite *'décor purement ornementale'* of, for example, Van Rysselberghe's illustrations for *Histoires Souveraines* by Villiers de l'Isle Adam (Brussels, 1899).

The Japanese influence which played such an important rôle in the graphic arts and painting seems to have made itself felt in England even before Edmond de Goncourt publicized it in France. The Pre-Raphaelite artist Rossetti introduced Whistler to Farmer and Rogers's Oriental emporium on Regent Street, where they obtained blue and white china. The young manager was Lazenby Liberty who afterwards set up on his own and whose wares gave the name *Stile Liberty* to Italian Art Nouveau. Curiously enough, Edmond de Goncourt got his 'blue' from a similar emporium in Paris run by a German Jew from Hamburg, Sigfried Bing. Bing also branched out into decoration and coined the name 'Art Nouveau' for his exhibition in 1896, where three whole rooms were furnished by an unknown Belgian decorator and craftsman, Henry van de Velde. In the meantime, Bing had accused Edmond de

Goncourt of plagiarizing his own Far Eastern agent's comments in a book on Hokusai; so that it was not surprising that, on leaving the exhibition, the old French aesthete threw up his hands in horror. Yet his suggestion that van de Velde's objects were like 'small sailing-ships built for speed—a yachting style' was well-meant and well-taken. A year later, in Dresden, the exhibition was a terrific success and this led to van de Velde eventually directing the Weimar School until the 1914 war. He was replaced there by Gropius.

We are now ready to examine the bewildering cross-fertilization which involved architects, painters and decorators in the new style as it proliferated through the nineties in Belgium, France, Germany and Austria. What had originated in industrialized England as a revolution in design took root in industrialized Belgium, home of the great architect Horta, and the many-talented van de Velde, who, like the French painters, Emile Bernard and Maurice Denis, was also an able theoretician. *'En Belgique on a vu toutes les témérités.'*

Apart from the somewhat over-praised Metro entrances of Guimard, the French contribution to Art Nouveau came primarily through painting: Puvis de Chavannes, Moreau, Odilon Redon were major influences. According to Pevsner 'the connecting link between Moreau, the Pre-Raphaelites and the new style of 1890 is the work of the Belgian Fernand Khnopff and the Dutch Jan Toorop' but an even stronger current flowed through Gauguin (especially in his more decorative moments;: his disciple and mentor, Emile Bernard; Maurice Denis; and the *Nabis*, Van Gogh was also an overwhelming revelation to van de Velde, and one might say that French Post-Impressionist painting and English Post-Pre-Raphaelite craftsmanship are the two master-forces in Art Nouveau which came together in Brussels and from there moved eastwards to Berlin, Munich, Vienna and presumably, Russia (see Leon Bakst's ballet decor). As additional sources one must add two English painters, Whistler whose Peacock Room with his own decorations, 1877, is certainly Art Nouveau, and the middle period of Aubrey Beardsley; and also the architect-designer Voysey, the first sight of whose wallpapers in Vienna made van de Velde cry out that 'spring has come at last'.

In 1900 Mackintosh (whose chair we have admired) was invited to exhibit the designs for one of his Glasgow tearooms before the Vienna Art Nouveau group, known as the Sezession. Klimt and Olbrich were in charge of the pavilion. 'Here was indeed the oddest mixture of puritanically severe forms designed for use with a truly lyrical evaporation of all interests in usefulness. These rooms were like dreams . . . vertical everywhere.' Professor Pevsner

thinks Mackintosh's interest in space links him to Frank Lloyd Wright and Corbusier. 'In dealing with him we are able at last to link up the development in England with the main tendency of continental art in the nineties, with Art Nouveau.' The chaste tearoom, enemy of the saloon, was at that time a revolutionary conception.

In considering the development of Art Nouveau we keep coming back to van de Velde, the most articulate and conscientious of the architect-artist-craftsmen and one with a religious understanding of natural forms. He has written marvellously about his early days (and those of the movement) when, after a nervous breakdown in 1890, he wished to redesign his whole environment for the young wife who had brought him back to health and I should like to quote from the selection from his memoirs by P. Morton Shand in *The Architectural Review*, September 1952:

'There will be no place in the society of the future for anything which is not of use to everyone' (1890).

'In 1891 Brussels saw the first things from Liberty's—small tables and cabinets lacquered in red and green, furnished cretonnes, a little rustic pottery of peasant type exposed in the Compagnie Japonaise show-windows on the Rue Royale . . . and 1891 is also memorable because that year, for the first time, *Les Vingt* invited some of those artists who had broken with academicism and turned to what would now be called industrial design to participate in their annual salon. Among the scanty exhibits were vases by Gauguin, plates decorated by Willy Finch, posters by Chéret and some children's books illustrated by Walter Crane.' (Kelmscott Press books were shown the next year.) 'The real forms of things were covered over. In this period the revolt against the falsificating of forms and against the Past was a moral revolt' . . .

'Our chief task now was to make ourselves thoroughly familiar with all the details of the recent revival of handicrafts in England. . . . The pioneers during the initial period of 1893-5 were the Liégeois cabinet-maker Serrulier-Bovy and myself in the field of furniture and decoration, and Hankar and Horta in architecture. . . .

'That house (the Tassel house) which was in the *Rue de Tunis*, was much discussed at the time and has since become an historical landmark. (Built by Horta 1892-3. The house was said to fit its engineer-owner, M. Tassel, like a well-cut coat.)

'Just as evil is forever seeking to corrupt virtue,' concluded van de Gelde, 'so throughout the history of art some malignant cancer has ceaselessly striven to taint or deform man's purest ideals of beauty. The brief interlude of Art

Nouveau, that ephemeral will o' the wisp which knew no law other than its own caprice, was succeeded as I had foretold, by the hesitant beginnings of a new, a disciplined and purposeful style, the style of our own age.'

Van de Velde, who had once designed his wife's clothes to blend with his furniture, wallpapers and silver and even ordered the foods which would play a part in the general colour scheme of his new home, with its bilious exterior, lived to design interiors for the big new steamers on the Dover-Ostend service. In fact longevity seems an additional privilege of anyone connected with Art Nouveau, with only Beardsley dying young. Nature looks after her own: Tiffany (Louis) 1848-1933 (American), Mackintosh 1851-1942 (Scots), Voysey 1857-1941 (British), Lalique 1860-1945 (French), Ensor 1860-1949 (Belgian), Horta 1861-1947 (Belgian), Van de Velde 1863-1957 (Belgian), Brangwyn 1857-1956 (British), Bradley (Will) 1869- (American), Wright (F. L.) 1869-1959 (American), Hoffman 1870-1955 (Austrian).

Hoffman's art degenerated into Viennese frivolity and he died penniless and neglected. Van de Velde and Baron Horta became respected reactionaries (the latter designed the new Brussels railway-station). In 1926, Gaudi, aged a mere seventy-four, was knocked down by a tram on his daily walk to Mass from his lodging in his unfinished cathedral. ['The greatest piece of creative architecture in the last twenty-five years'—Louis Sullivan.] Mistaken for a tramp, he was carried unconscious to the pauper's ward, since no taxi would take him.

While Horta was creating wrought-iron interior winter-gardens of airy freshness such as that of the van Eetveld House, 1895, the Catalan Gaudi, like Horta of humble origin, was concentrating on surface, on the new exterior forms and shapes which iron and cement could yield. His Art Nouveau (called *Modernismo*) triumphs are, however, later than Horta's, and the Casa Batlló and Casa Mila, both on the Paseo de Grácia in Barcelona, date from 1905 to 1910. They have been praised by Sullivan, Gropius and Corbusier but are best described by Dali as '*aspirations—concrètes, extra*-plastiques', 'a house built in the shape of the sea with fossilized waves and wrought-iron foam' in a formula '*convulsive-ondulante*'. He speaks of the 'collective sentiment of ferocious individualism which characterized the founders of the style'. 'In a modern-style building Gothic is metamorphosed into Greek, into Far Eastern, and—by a certain involuntary fantasy—into Renaissance which can suddenly become pure modern-style again, dynamic and asymmetric and that withal in the fluid time and space of a single window! They are the first edible houses and beauty shall be nothing if not edible!'

The garden suburb, now a park, built for the Guell family, 1900-14, in-

cludes ravishing polychrome serpentine benches and collages of various bright and broken materials which, according to Henry Russell Hitchcock, 'compete for priority with paintings by Kandinsky and Delaunay as the first examples of wholly abstract art'. He was both architect and sculptor in the Ruskinian tradition and a mystic whose earliest ironwork (1878-80) pre-dates even MacMurdo's cover. The vitality of all of Gaudi's buildings gives the lie to those who consider Art Nouveau a decadent calligraphy, and they increase in importance now that we cannot see such masterpieces as Endell's *Studio Elvira*, 1897-98 (Munich).

In my memory, the highlights of Art Nouveau, besides talking about Gaudi to the Conde Guell ('Don't mention that man! He ruined my father!') and meeting the gentle Voysey in the early 1930s with his latest disciple, the youthful John Betjeman, was my visit to the Stoclet Palace. As so little has been written about this last and greatest masterpiece of the style (Austrian *Sezession*, Hoffman and Klimt, Brussels, 1904-11), I will give my impressions. The palace belongs to the last rectilinear counter-form of Art Nouveau. It was constructed with no thought of cost for the Baron Stoclet who gave Hoffman the freedom that Richard Wagner desired from King Ludwig. It is both austere and supremely elegant and is built of a cold Norwegian marble, yet not altogether cold, with windows of solid crystal. The street side is functional, with a long staircase window and a tower like an advanced Swiss church. The garden-side is in swelling Baroque, and the garden is also a construction with a huge blank wall to shut out the other houses. Inside all is colour and light, and the predominating material appears to be lapis lazuli. There is an intimate theatre fit for Pelléas and Melisande, the famous dining room with Klimt's mosaics and many salons to hold the Baron's collections which included Merovingian jewellery, Byzantine, Celtic and Coptic objects, Chinese swords and the then unknown 'art of the Steppes'. Hoffman's grave, elegant personality is everywhere. He designed the furniture, the splendid bathrooms, the linen, the cutlery, the pens and writing paper, the binding of the books ornamented by Van Rysselberghe for early editions of Gide, even the Visitors' Book. Everything is a functional luxury, everything breathes the taste of the designer and the restless curiosity of the princely owner (whose three children have since inherited it). It is both the last *Lust-schloss* and the precursor of the liners *Bremen* and *Europa*—the fitting conclusion to the work of Voysey and Mackintosh, of van de Velde and Horta, the Northern antithesis to Gaudi, and it winds up the movement which never degenerated into sentimentality, flatness or weariness in the hands of these great men.

'Purple Bird' woven fabric designed by C. F. A. Voysey (1899)

Chair (1897) and table (about 1908)
designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Desk, chair and carpet
designed by C. F. A. Voysey about 1896

Theatre

JOHN WHITING

Luther

Little Monk, you have chosen a difficult path

There is a new puritanism about. The idea is heavily over-subscribed in the theatre.

The way of thinking seems to go something like this. Plain speaking must be the order of the day. The equivocal is suspect. Wit causes distraction: cleverness is a blind for some sort of corruption. Colour and glory dazzle, or worse, confuse. The virtues of courage and humour are more than absurd, they are useless. There must not be two sides to a question. Basic needs must not be elevated; food is matter for evacuation, not energy, and sex must stay rooted between the legs. How long will it be before we hear again the ridiculous term 'natural man'? Not long, if things go on at this rate in this direction.

The younger and intelligent dramatic critics deplore the corrupt ceremonies of the theatre at the moment. Many of them have reacted strongly against the genius of M. Anouilh. His artifice is thought to be shiftiness, his negligent wit inhuman. He is not down to earth.

The perfect exemplar of that deplorable position is Martin Luther, about whom there is a new play.

This disgusting peasant, filthy in word, mind and body, a kind of human sewer, did more harm to Western Europe than any other man. Graceless and repulsive, he blundered into history on his knees, brought there by a clap of thunder, his bestial superstition, and fear for his safety, both spiritual and physical. Elevated far above his capabilities by ignorant and commercial interests he was given to making pig noises against authority. But when authority moved against him he became as servile as a sponge. Gifted with the sense of timing which is possessed by second-rate actors, he stood his ground only at expedient moments. His power of language, often spoken of when nothing else of any good can be said of him, is over-estimated. A rabid anti-Semite, he laid ground for the persecution of that race. He is credited with statements so vile, so inhuman, of such excess, that it is hard to believe he was sane.

Luther is a perfect example of the kind of man society vomits up at moments of crisis. Placed in a position where his words are widely heard, such a man begins to believe that he is more than he is. Pressed to acts and decisions which frighten him he is driven to fear that the social forces which created him will at last destroy him. So he betrays them, as Luther did the peasants, or vilifies them, as Hitler did the German people in his last days. Death for such a man is a mercy. Luther continued to live: the greatest sell-out of all time.

Mr John Osborne has taken Luther as the central figure in his new play.

This is as good an occasion as any to see how Mr Osborne is getting on, so let us take a little look back.

It is only five years, although it seems a lifetime, since we first heard of Mr Osborne. He was borne into sight on the wave of optimism which broke in Sloane Square with the opening of the Royal

Court Theatre. The wave receded, as waves do, and Mr Osborne could be seen, floundering a little, as was to be expected, with his play, *Look Back in Anger*.

The play was very coolly received on the first night. It lurched to the end of its first week, seats to be had for the asking. There is a legend in the theatre that it was Mr Kenneth Tynan's review on the following Sunday which made the play into a success. I have recently looked at this article. I am astonished to find it full of qualifications. The play is a *minor* miracle, it needs changes. Mr Tynan gives ten plays a year better notices than this, and patronizes every one of them a great deal less.

No, it was not a critic that made *Look Back in Anger* a world-wide success. It was Mr Osborne's talent. And there's no doubt about that.

But although Jimmy Porter's voice continued for many months to speak from the Royal Court stage, Mr Osborne remained a playwright, and had not yet become a 'movement'.

This translation took place the next year with the production of *The Entertainer*. This piece, mercilessly derivative in style, contained symbolism. It was at once apparent that Mr Osborne was not concerned with you and me and Jimmy Porter. He was concerned with England, the Crown, the Church, Democracy, and Socialism. In short, the front page of *The New Statesman*.

The voice of Jimmy Porter was lost. Another took its place. The voice of Mr Osborne himself. He spoke to us by various mediums. He chastised us. We liked that, although we didn't quite understand what we'd done. Snarling (as he would put it) with the anger he had made so famous he signed petition for tolerance. Racial segregation, capita punishment and nuclear disarmamen were all taken under his wing. W applauded. It's not true, you see, w said, that the working classes don't car

About this time a small domesti comedy called *Epitaph for George Dillo* drifted across the scene. It was reporte to be an early play by Mr Osborne, wri ten in collaboration. It was a delicat piece, concerning itself with th dilemmas of a group of human beings. soon went from sight. More importan things were in hand.

One of these was *The World of Pat Slickey*.

This musical play must rank as on of the monuments of ineptitude in th English theatre. Produced by M Osborne himself in the style of a 192 production of *No, No, Nanette*, rambled on for hours, although no understandably, for many weeks. It em ployed actors and singers of a desperat archness. What it was all about we sha probably never know, for the printe version is more incomprehensible tha the stage performance.

The most exciting aspect of the whol thing was the out of town openin Those diligent men, the theatrica columnists, sent daily, almost hourly reports. They spoke of frantic cuttin of a five-hour performance on the on hand, and manly efforts to shore up th financial arrangements on the othe Strange American ladies, undoubtedly a invention of Mr Osborne, made stat ments. We began to wonder if M Osborne's real talent didn't lie outsid the theatre. In the circus, for example.

By now we have become used to management presenting not a play b Mr Osborne, but Mr Osborne.

The play which recently opened in London is called *Luther*. Mr Osborne's name outside the theatre is in letters of the same size. A quick glance: John Osborne by Luther? Surely not.

All the same, whatever the play is called, and whoever it is by, it has been widely praised. Although I've yet to meet anybody who likes it. And let me say at once that this is not Mr Osborne's fault. He has laid out a method of production in the text of the play which is concise and clear. But the play has been *produced*. For example, in the printed version Mr Osborne starts the play with one man simply and straightway speaking to another. In the stage performance the play begins with a lengthy celebration of mass, or some such nonsense. Again and again, the text of the play demonstrates what is wanted and always the production ignores the instruction or deliberately clouds it.

When you are up against it with a playwright you can always admire his use of language. Let us do so in this case, but with a reservation. German is a fine language for scatological reference. English is apt to squeak under the pressure, as it does in this play. Mr Osborne's transcription of Luther's diatribes more often than not produces a long whistle, when it should bring forth a German fart.

But it is very difficult to judge a play when it has been so criminally mishandled as in this production. We shall have to wait until Mr Osborne's sense of loyalty deserts him, and he moves house.

Beyond criticism, in the right way, is the magnificent Albert Finney as Luther. Here is a man who breaks the conventions of his art with an easy assurance and complete confidence. I remember I first saw Mr Finney as a student some years ago in a play by Schnitzler. He came on stage dressed in evening clothes. He proceeded to blow the play to pieces, and in doing so literally burst out of his costume before our eyes. At the end white waistcoat and boiled shirt hung about him. It was an involuntary symbolic act which caused great satisfaction. It is to Mr Osborne's credit that Luther's gown manages to contain Mr Finney.

Well, that brings us up to date with Mr Osborne. I was hoping this would be merely an interim report, but news received from the south of France seems to indicate otherwise.

It is sad that we shall have no more plays from him. If he could learn to whistle in the dark like the rest of us it might be possible. Still, let him be content. *Look Back in Anger* was a masterly expression of an age and generation: *Epitaph for George Dillon* was underestimated (that other hand always worries me); *The Entertainer* gave a fine part to our best actor; *Paul Slickey* was a disaster; and *Luther* remains unproduced.

Yes, let him be content. It's not bad going for any playwright over five long long years.

Music

ARTUR SCHNABEL

My Student Days

Vienna around the *fin de siècle* had certain well-defined categories of citizens. The tenor of social life there was given by the aristocracy which — centred around its peak, the court—exercised all the high functions connected with a still old-fashioned court, and was generally and gladly accepted as the social *prima donna*. Second to the court and aristocracy came the Church, the Army and the Administration. It was proverbial that these noble bosses (with some exceptions of course) never overworked themselves. Not to work—in a common sense—was a part of *noblesse oblige*. I think this is quite an important fact. The less time was lost in work, the more was left for the only admissible competition: the desire to excel each other in the tasks of *noblesse*, based on solidity and refinement. Third came a titled group without century-old pedigrees. They were the lower layer of the aristocracy, composed mostly of men (or their descendants) who for outstanding achievements in the army or in the administration were chosen for promotion to noble rank. Long service—endurance—was counted as one of the achievements. Also a few merchants and bankers were on occasion rewarded in this way. In the second half of the nineteenth century even artists, scientists, doctors, educators and so on, were raised to nobility—presumably in the last phase of its fading glory. Then came three layers of *bourgeoisie*, and towards the bottom the varied groups be low the white collar supremacy. Amon them were wine-growers, for very goo wine was grown in the close vicinity o Vienna. The wine-keller, in the winte and especially the wine-garden in sprin and summer, were frequented by every one. There the social categories mixe and, if sufficiently animated by th young wine, even fraternized for a fe hours in the equality of intoxicatio These gardens were often in front of th vineyards. The wine was served i carafes, from the cask. Song and wome were never missing. It was the most in toxicating trio ensemble—leading t freedom-from-care.

The lower classes in Vienna were rather rough crowd, in contrast to th upper ones, who excelled in great charm and elegance. It was, I repeat, th eleventh hour of that culture which be gins in the home and probably also end there. A kind of effort to enjoy these las performances of that culture was quit striking. The upper classes in Vienn seemed to know that they were doome It was a last escape into sweet super ficiality, into an aesthetically pleasan defeatism. One of the best characteriza tions of this decadence-conscious Vienn was given by her her own people durin the First World War. With an inclina tion to joke about their weaknesses, the parodied a German Army communiqué The Germans reported: 'The situation i serious but not at all desperate.' Th Viennese: 'The situation is desperat but not at all serious.'

Life in such an atmosphere was no enjoyable for everyone. I, for one, did no feel entirely happy there. The spirit o defeatism gradually permeating the ai hemmed in creative impulses and th healthy development of higher gift

both not yet rare among the Viennese. The maxim: enjoy as much as possible the mannered elegance, as well as more robust pastimes, was not conducive to so-called serious ambitions. When my family moved to Vienna because of my assignment to the musical profession, we first lived in a sort of ghetto—a voluntary ghetto, not a compulsory one, as for instance in Czarist Russia. Very soon after, we moved to a somewhat less homogenous quarter. I don't remember very much about the chosen ghetto: just the street, the synagogue and the grocer where I often went to get things for my mother. I remember that the herrings always smelled of kerosene, because the two commodities were kept in barrels next to each other. I remember also our family doctor, Doctor Ignatz Kreisler, the father of Fritz Kreisler, the famous violinist. I thus knew Fritz Kreisler, who is several years older than I, from my boyhood on. His father, the doctor, still alive in my memory, was an angelic man with a white beard, one of the kindest I remember.

After I had started, on Leschetizky's advice, my lessons with Madame Essipoff, someone told my mother that I ought also to have instruction in composition. So one day she took me to Mr Anton Bruckner. I remember exactly the little I saw of his home, also the street and even the number of the house. We went up one flight of stairs, knocked at a door, and heard the sound of slowly approaching slippers. A bald-headed man opened the door, just wide enough for me to peep in. I noticed a dusty hallway with some laurel wreaths piled up, and stacks of music. 'What do you want?' he asked. My mother explained: 'I want you to give lessons in theory to my son.' He grumbled: 'I don't teach children,' pushed us out and closed the door. This was my only personal acquaintance with Bruckner. Afterwards I saw him only from a greater distance.

Because of this futile interview with Bruckner, Leschetizky had to recommend another teacher in composition and theory for me. He mentioned a much less well-known composer. This new teacher was very pedantic, dry, and uninspiring. I must have shown some resistance—though I was in later years often praised for having always been a 'good' boy, patient, and if dissatisfied, chiefly with myself. At any rate, I left this new teacher after a few months of instruction and was taken to the third trainer recommended to us. He was Dr Mandiczewski. Dr Mandiczewski was a great, a wonderful man. He was in charge of the archives at the Society of the Friends of Music. It was not a municipal or imperial school, but was subsidized. Mandiczewski was the amanuensis of Brahms, so I was very lucky. I studied with him for years, and he was always very nice to me. I had to go a fairly long way from my family's apartment to the one room in which he lived. (At that time most musicians lived rather modestly: I have also seen Brahms's rooms—only two rooms—very different from the mansions our present-day stars live in.) I had to be at Mandiczewski's at eight o'clock in the morning—he had no time to give me lessons at any other hour, for at 9.15 or so he had to be in the archives. I was then eleven or twelve. He allowed me to accompany him to his archives, and stay there as long as I wished. He never paid much attention to my presence, and I could acquaint myself with all the treasures there in perfect leisure. A few simple rooms—I think not even fire-

proof—filled with the most precious musical documents—numerous manuscripts of the greatest composers and a great collection of works presenting the history of music. While I with awe was idling in this shrine, Mandiczewski went on with his work.

It was the habit of Brahms every Sunday morning of the spring and autumn season to make an excursion (if the weather permitted) into the lovely hilly woods surrounding Vienna. He was accompanied by a few friends, chiefly musicians. When I was twelve to thirteen, Mandiczewski thought me old enough to join them once in a while. I thus enjoyed the unique privilege of spending several Sundays as a boy with Brahms and his companions. One gathered for these excursions at eight in the morning, at a tram-stop opposite the Vienna Opera, took a tram, drawn by one horse, drove through suburbs to the terminal and continued then on foot. On all these occasions Brahms treated me in the same manner: before a meal he would ask me whether I was hungry; after one, whether I had had enough. That was all he ever said to me. Why, after all, should he talk to a child?

I also often saw Brahms indoors. Mandiczewski knew most of those Viennese families to whom good music, in their homes, was an inner necessity. As amanuensis of Brahms he went where his master went. And as my teacher he helped me upwards not only by admitting me to these Sunday walks, but also by introducing me to some of the music lovers whose intimacy with Brahms seemed their greatest pride. In one of these families a private choir gathered once or twice a week, conducted by Dr Mandiczewski and led by the hostess, who in her youth had had a high reputation as a singer. I was asked to accompany this choir, sometimes four-hand with one of the sons of the family, approximately my age. He, Erich von Hornbostel, later a well-known physiologist, died much too young some years ago, in New York. Brahms came occasionally to these meetings. In his last years, he spent much time at the home of a music lover by the name of Conrad. Mr Conrad had three daughters, near my age. Mandiczewski introduced me also to the Conrads, not only as a young musician, but also as a possible playmate or companion for the girls. During the winter chiefly, the Sunday afternoons at the Conrads were devoted to chamber music performances. They had, of course, some music every weekday as well in such a milieu, but the Sunday was for all concerned (the head of the family, a merchant, and most of the professionals, or amateurs, who played the chamber music or listened) the time for leisure and pleasure—not to forget the girls who had no school. I was often allowed to participate actively. My never weakened love of chamber music is certainly rooted in this early chance to hear and perform it.

Brahms was often present on these occasions. He mostly sat reading in the library, which was several rooms distant from the music room. All doors in the flight of rooms used to be wide open, and, if interested, Brahms might have heard the music very well. Whether he did or not I could not tell. Thirty or forty years later I read to my astonishment that he had. That moreover he had praised what I did at the piano. This story is still circulated. I do not know its origin, and I wish you to know that it was not I who told it. The reliability of many such stories (not only in my case) is question-

able. I myself do not compile or supply them (I never have) for advertising or other purposes. This is for other people to attend to. Asked for it by concert managements I advise them to gather the desired data from books of reference and other sources and to select and present what and as they like. I admit that this procedure involves certain risks. After playing somewhere last year, on my return home I found the programme in my pocket. Interested to see whether the annotations in it corresponded to my conception of the works I had performed, I began to read. That the correspondence was not complete did not surprise me. I had experienced that before. What surprised me was the little sketch of my career. It said among other things that Brahms had heard me play at my first recital and had been so impressed that he had become an intimate friend of mine. Perhaps one day I shall read that I played billiards with Mozart.

* * *

Ossip Gabrilowitsch and Ignaz Friedman were co-students of mine at Leschetizky's, though they came to him several years later than I. I was also acquainted with Samuel Clemens's (Mark Twain's) daughters, Clara and her sister. Clara later married Gabrilowitsch. I remember very distinctly several tea parties at Mark Twain's apartment in the Hotel Metropole in Vienna. His appearance was unforgettably striking. I don't remember that he ever spoke to me.

I began composing at the same time I started playing the piano. My studies with Mandiczewski did not go further than the first elements of counterpoint. I never worked with a teacher on form or orchestration. The only thing which I really have 'learned' in my life was piano-playing. After my one year with Madame Essipoff, I occasionally had instruction from other Leschetizky assistants—five or six of them. They differed in pianistic functions as much as one can differ, and were also not at all unanimous in their approach to music. Each, of course, called his conception the true Leschetizky method. Several published books on it. If a student were to read all these books he would get a considerable demonstration of confusion. What I have learned from Leschetizky himself I am unable to say, to estimate, to appreciate. He succeeded in releasing all the vitality and *élan* and sense of beauty a student had in his nature, and would not tolerate any deviation or violation of what he felt to be truthfulness of expression. As you see, all this devotion, seriousness, care and honesty is compatible with the virtuoso type represented by him. Why we, today, have in general a less flattering opinion of the virtuoso is a problem I recommend you to think about again and again.

* * *

I was present at the Vienna début of Yvette Guilbert, the famous French *diseuse*, although I, as a boy of fifteen, had no business to be there. With no school in the morning I could stay at nightly debates as long as they lasted. They ranged from positivism to occultism—with everything in between. The flavour of decadence was never missing. This explains my impulse (enhanced by the advice of some friends) to go westwards, to Germany. The Germans were immensely, though rather secretly, respected and admired by the Viennese, with a kind of condescending awe. They considered them barbaric and boorish in comparison with the beauty, elegance and culture of the Viennese, with their charming (though empty) politeness—

GO WELL- GO SHELL

Cars are thankful
for every tankful
of Super Shell with I.C.A.
(and engines are grateful
when they're Multigrade-ful)

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

in the upper classes—and their soft speech. Nevertheless, a niggling inferiority complex slightly disturbed their self-esteem.

* * *

My mother and sisters left Vienna in '92 or '93 (I am not quite sure which) and went back to the cleaner of the twin cities near my birthplace. They went to join my father whose business kept him there. I was handed over to some strangers and became a kind of lodger. After three years, my entire family came back to Vienna. My father died there in 1927, and in 1942 my mother, at the age of eighty-four, was taken away by the Nazis and never heard of again. My sisters escaped to the United States.

Selected Books

JAMES BROCKWAY

The Disturbing and the Disturbed

Some post-war Dutch poets and novelists

'Thinking of Holland, I see broad rivers . . .' goes a twentieth century Dutch equivalent of 'Home Thoughts From Abroad'. Since the end of the war many Dutchmen, most of them writers, have been airing the view that the time has come for the English-speaking world to do a little thinking about Holland, too, and particularly about Dutch writing. For there *is* such a thing as Dutch writing, and although it is still a closed book to all but a few million of the world's inhabitants, this writing has very close ties with modern world writing, is, indeed, part and parcel of it. Perhaps it is because in Holland itself there is so lively an interest in the work of English authors that lack of knowledge—and, worse still, lack of curiosity—about contemporary Dutch literature should seem so unreasonable, and perhaps a little ungracious, to Dutchmen. So much so that some of them often overlook the fact that works by Dutch authors have appeared in England and America in the twentieth century and in increasing numbers in the past decade.

For the Englishman making the acquaintance of post-war Dutch writing (and for the Frenchman as well, for that matter) there are any number of surprises in store. Who in England, for instance, is aware that Holland had its Jimmy Porter nine years before Mr John Osborne provided England with hers? His name is Frits van Egters, and he arrived on the scene in 1947, in Simon van het Reve's prizewinning and shindy-raising first novel, *De Avonden (The Evenings)*. Who in France is alive to the fact that the notions, purposes and methods of the *nouveau roman* were already *vieux jeu* in Holland by the time the French novelists (and critics) had got to work? The same ingredients are present in the poetry of the Dutch Experimentalists, who first began to publish their strange new poetry in the late 'forties: a rejection, a destruction, of the old moulds, of the preconceptions of bourgeois writing: a new way of looking at things; a disregard of the traditional ordering function of the intellect, a *dérèglement de tous les sens*, a beginning again from scratch. All

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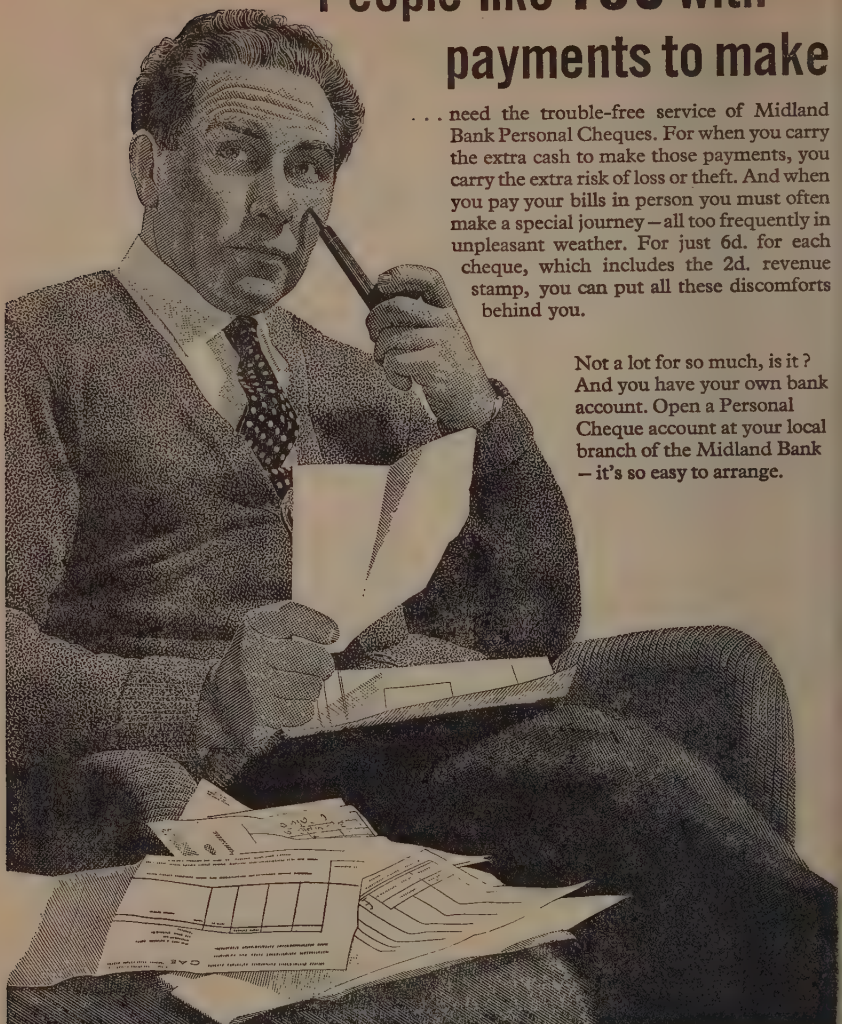

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elements with political and social as well as aesthetic aspects, and evident not only in this poetry but in some Dutch prose works too.

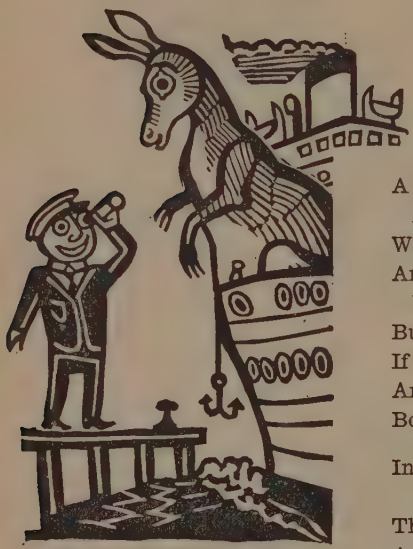
On further consideration, however, it is not so very surprising that a writer like Van het Reve, and others like W. F. Hermans and Harry Mulisch, should have been launching their attack on their society long before Messrs Amis, Wain, Osborne and Sillitoe began attacking theirs. For these Dutch writers were produced by the cataclysmic experience of five years of enemy occupation, in which the society into which they were born broke down, in the end completely. This side of Auschwitz it is difficult to imagine an environment more drab, more disheartening, a social setting more subversive of the bourgeois ideals of order, comfort and decency, than Holland in the Hunger Winter of 1944-5. The aesthetic revolution this new Dutch poetry and prose embodied sprang from a social, political and psychological situation. It was not the planned child of a few leading writers and poets, not comparable, for instance, to the revolution associated with the names of Hulme, Pound and Eliot. It was involuntary, inevitable. Its cosmopolitan features, its conscious anti-provincialism, were also the product of the war, which had shocked Holland once and for all out of her cosy political isolation. Neutralism—and not only political neutralism—was dead for ever.

Not that Dutch writing had been wholly devoid of new trends or totally impervious to outside influences in the inter-war period. In the 'twenties H. Marsman and Herman van den Bergh were writing their expressionist verse, and the 'thirties, which saw severe economic depression and the rise of Hitler just over the frontier, had produced a poetry and prose of social realism and political awareness. It was not without reason that the critic, Menno ter Braak, guiding light and most brilliant intellect of this period, committed suicide when Nazi troops moved into Holland. At the same time his friend and colleague, the poet, novelist and essayist, E. du Perron, died of a heart attack, and Marsman, then the leading Dutch poet, was drowned attempting to reach England from Bordeaux, when his ship, the *Bérénice*, was torpedoed in June 1940.

If, then, it was the surge of new ideas and new creative energy following upon five years of oppression and aesthetic stagnation which provided the driving force for new writing in post-war Holland, it was the tragic and dramatic disappearance of these and other leading figures which made a new movement essential. Yet this new writing proved — inevitably — to be utterly unlike the rational, intellectual movement associated with Ter Braak and Du Perron and their magazine, *Forum*.

The Experimentalist poets did not claim to form a school. They were, however, able to find a common platform in the *avant-garde* magazine, *Podium*, and the essays devoted to them by one of their number, the poet and critic Paul Rodenko, and above all, the appearance, in 1951, of *Atonaal*, an anthology of their work introduced by Simon Vinkenoog, made it difficult not to regard them as a group. What is more, though they have since gone their individual ways, their poetry has so many features in common—and one particularly: that it is unlike any that had been written

The travelling Kangaroo



A Kangaroo from Dublin Zoo,
A female of the species,
Was put inside a sort of ark
And shipped direct to Regents Park
Where every prospect pleases.
But this marsupial had some doubt
If she would get her Guinness Stout,
And so she packed herself a few
Bottles of What is Good for You.

In England, when the Customs men
She failed to understand,
They searched her . . . ouch!
And in her pouch
They found the contraband.
Protesting was of little use
For ignorance is no excuse.

And so in future all beware,
When asked,
"What have you to declare?"
Declare in accents loud and free —

Guinness

is good for you — and me

GE.3627.D

in Holland before—that there is adequate justification for seeing them as a movement. Their poetry is primitive, 'pre-rational', anti-intellectual. It is a poetry, sometimes, of almost animal responses.

Heirs of an age of violence, cruelty and disruption, these poets have renounced the world into which they have been born without *their* permission, a world of false values and assailable institutions (and of false poetic values and assailable poetic institutions), and seem, some of them, to have retired to their nursery attic, where the fire has gone out, there attempting to build a new world out of toy bricks, or rather, out of plasticine, which they can, and must, knead into their own shapes. One of their number (though in many respects the least typical), Hans Andreus, has said, in fact, in an early poem that he has peopled the pond in his garden with aquatic plants and fish 'and then, with my own hands/I created blue fishermen/out of costly clay'.

The task the Experimentalists had set themselves was, of course, an impossible one, and it is not surprising that they should have since been criticized for narcissism, for over-concern with themselves, with sensory perception, and especially with their own bodies. The body is, after all, not only an obvious departure point for primitive experience, for beginning again, but also the last retreat of those who reject the world that is *there*, whether they asked to be thrust into it or not. Reject it, because they cannot come to terms with it, just as they cannot come to terms with life itself—for to accept life is also, among other things, to accept death.

If they have failed to build a new world, the Experimentalists have in any event recorded their protest and, in doing so, created a new poetry. For in rejecting the world they found, they also rejected the poetry they found and built another to take its place. Built it, sometimes gropingly, as in the case of Hans Lodeizen, 'a voice wise yet stammering'; sometimes bleakly and despairingly, like Remco Campert: 'I am a voice/cold and dying/full of wintry words'; sometimes with a playful resignation, like Hans Andreus: 'I no longer care about logic/I forget all the bikes and the cars/I sit on a branch like anthropos/and sing along with the birds/ cantate cantabile', and sometimes with an aggressive, self-assured exuberance, like Lucebert: 'I'm reeling off a lovely little revolution.'

Hans Lodeizen (1924-50)[1] was the forerunner who, perhaps unwittingly, set the keynote and opened the way for this new poetry. Sensuous, wistful, his poetry is capable of exerting a wider appeal than that of most of his contemporaries (a copy of Lodeizen's posthumous collection will often be found on the bookshelves of those who do not normally read poetry), while interest in him was inevitably heightened by his early and tragic death. His isolation from the world had roots in a personal psychological problem; yet through his poetry he succeeded in generalizing this problem. In free verse—one might almost say in 'Lodeizen verse' for it has a form, mood and texture all its own—he expressed an unfulfilled longing for a world wiser, richer and subtler than the world he found himself in.

Here the rejection of the outside world has nothing aggressive about it. The iconoclasm has yet to begin. In fact

[1] See *The London Magazine* (old series), Vol. 7, No 2, February 1960.

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WESTMINSTER

the keynote is still a longing for reconciliation.

The poetry of Remco Campert,[1] born in 1929, is reminiscent of Lodeizen's in its estrangement from the world, though here the rejection is more deliberate and absolute. His poems are bleaker and more bitter while he makes greater use of surrealist devices. Both in his earlier and later poems, Campert is still haunted by the wartime environment of his childhood:

Charred and rusted remnants
of shot down bomber planes
were the symbols of disaster
I played among as a boy
(1951)

and

the sky was the colour of pill-boxes
ack-ack drew a charcoal skull.
(1959)

He is more socially conscious, too, than Lodeizen, conscious particularly of the drabness, greyness and inadequacy of the acquisitive society shaped by the efficiency fiends and planners who rule his country and paid lip-service to by newspaper men. In one poem this comes out clearly when he is showing a negro the wonders of western civilization evident in his own urban environment; in another Campert effectively compares the Dutch churches with petrol-filling stations.

Several of these poets (Campert among them) seek a refuge from their dissatisfaction with the world in sexual relationships. There is then a change of tone. In the following poem, Campert's voice is no longer 'cold and dying, full of wintry words'.

Life With You

Aglow from head to toe
as though I'm being scourged
and caressed
by a sun and a storm.

How you fill me, sweet rain,
through my two ears,
till I'm a gourd
bursting with love.

Like stories which thrilled me
when I was a boy,
you set my whole world
atremble:
the forest's on fire
and we open our homes
to each other's flames.

The same thing is true of the poetry of Hans Andreus, born in 1926, whose first volume appeared in 1951. In that small book, with its surrealist title, *Muziek voor Kijkdieren (Music for Look-Animals)*, there is a poem on love, uncharacteristically rhymed and in marked anapaestic metre, entitled 'Game', which goes roughly like this:

Who knows of the game of the child
and the woman
the child and the woman are in
search of pale blue
but the child finds pale grey and the
woman pale fawn
and the child is the woman and the
woman the child.

Who knows of the game of the child
and the woman
the child and the woman are in search
of bright red

[1] See *The London Magazine* (old series), Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1961.

Laurence Whistler

AUDIBLE SILENCE

A new collection of poems by the author of *The View from this Window*. The judges remarked, at the Cheltenham Festival, 'This poet's verse is like his engraved glass; exquisitely made, lucid, beautiful, and permanent.'

12*s* 6*d*

R. S. Thomas

TARES

New poems by the author of *Song at the Year's Turning* and *Poetry for Supper*.

THE POETRY BOOK SOCIETY CHOICE

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Charles Causley

JOHNNY ALLELUIA

A book of poems by the author of *Union Street*, about whom *The Times* wrote 'Mr Causley is a poet to read aloud. To read him is to want to share him . . . a book of poems that can be understood and hugely enjoyed.'

12*s* 6*d*

John Smith

A LETTER TO LAO TZE

'John Smith compels admiration by his lyrical verve and vividness of description. This is poetry that is given, not willed, and is a joy.' POETRY REVIEW

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RUPERT HART-DAVIS

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but neither child nor woman finds the
red that they seek
and the child and the woman together
find death.

Early in 1959, however, he is writing poems about a love which no longer means disillusion and death, despite the fact that the poet is still, significantly, alone:

Tree of Man

You are my warm earth,
you are my black soil.
I stand in you
and grow and do
everything,
of everything so much—
but sometimes nothing too:
for then I'm no longer waiting
for anything anymore,
for nothing, for then I seek
even less than nothing,
existing alone
in the illumined air,
in the warm earth,
the dark soil.

The distrust of human society, of others, still lingers even in these more recent love poems by Andreus. In one, for instance, he tells his love that should he die tomorrow, she should tell the trees, a child, an animal, houses of bricks and stone how much he had loved her:

But tell it not to men
They would never believe you,
They would simply hate to believe
That mere man could love mere
woman
As I loved you.

The most sensational of the Experimentalists is a poet who goes by the name of Lucebert, complete, until recently, with fringe beard, cloak, and if not a dagger, very probably a prophet's staff. Lucebert, born in 1924, is a conjurer with words, who in recent years has taken to conjuring in paint as well, some of his work having been on show in New York. The movement's High Priest, it was he who wrote early on that experimental poetry is a sea into which all the rivers with names like Dada, etc., flow, the sea being an effective image for freedom as well as for revolutionary power and the rejection of imposed form. For formlessness even. He has written, too, that in our time beauty no longer consoles the human being but frightens him, making him aware that he is but a 'breadcrumb on the skirt of the universe'. Lucebert's 'liberated' verse, celebrated particularly for its untranslatable word-play, is exuberant, as the following well-known early poem of his may, perhaps, show:

I'm reeling off a little revolution
I'm reeling off a lovely little revolution
I'm no longer of land
I'm of water again.

I bear foaming whitehorses on my
head
I bear shooting phantoms in my head
On my back rests a mermaid
On my back rests the wind
The wind and the mermaid sing
The foaming whitehorses hiss
The shooting phantoms fall

I'm reeling off a lovely little rustling
revolution
And I fall and I hiss and I sing

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The Experimentalists' protest is often oblique—the shaking off of the old poetic manner and diction amounted to a protest in itself and one aimed not only at the Literary Establishment but also at the smug, colourless society which accepted the old values without question.

In the work of the younger novelists, the protest can also be oblique, as it is in many of the stories and novels of Harry Mulisch. But in the work of a writer like W. F. Hermans, the most formidable figure among post-war Dutch novelists, the protest becomes direct, amounts to a full-scale frontal attack with heavy artillery. Gerard Kornelis van het Reve, author of the novel *The Evenings* mentioned earlier on (he was then known as Simon van het Reve) occupies a place somewhere between the two. Of these three, Mulisch is the most prolific, Van het Reve, tantalizingly, the least.

Since 1952, Mulisch (born in 1927) has published several novels and short stories, and in February 1960 his first play, *Tanchelijn—The Chronicle of a Heretic*, set in the twelfth century with twentieth century slang, was produced in Amsterdam. Literary prizes abound in Holland; not always to the benefit of the writer, or of his dignity, for they are awarded by 'juries' whose assessments, however glowing, never seem to avoid the condescending ring of the schoolmaster's report. Mulisch has had his share of these prizes, and one of his books was actually commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences, a peculiar bureaucratic form of literary patronage adopted in Holland, which does more, perhaps, for the *amour-propre* of officials than for the status of the writers they patronize.

An over-fluent writer, Mulisch's work is aggressive, provocative, and often maddeningly fantastic. An impression of this can be gained simply from titles and details. One prize-winning novel, for instance, is entitled *The Black Light*, another *The Stone Bridal Bed*. In one (too long) short story, *The Horses' Leap and the Freshwater Sea*, five aged, bearded Frisian fishermen, called Odde, Gnodde, Slikke, Stobbe and Ubbe, sink into the despised fresh water of the former salt Zuyder Zee and drown resignedly, as one of their number declaims the legend of their island, now revoltingly embedded in reclaimed farmland. In another short story a Dutch soldier in New Guinea turns to stone. A book of nightmarish stories, entitled *The Miracle*, has for sub-title 'Episodes of Consolation and Debauchery from the Life of Mr Tiennoppen'.

Mulisch's extravagance elicits an equal extravagance in his eulogists and critics. But perhaps he is not wholly to blame. His verve, his abundant talent cry out for a wider audience than he is likely to find in the Dutch-speaking world, and given that audience, its higher standards and more stringent criticism, he might discard his less mature quirks and poses and a seeming compulsion to impress by exhibitionist stratagems.

It would be difficult to imagine two books less like each other than Van het Reve's 1947 novel, *The Evenings*, and Keith Waterhouse's 1959 novel, *Billy Liar*. Yet the basic situation is the same in both books. Frits van Egters, the hero of *The Evenings*, hopelessly at odds with his environment, particularly with his parents, would have been a far healthier character if he had been able to take Billy Fisher's way out

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through self-glorifying fantasies and pathological lying. But though he has many pathological traits, he lacks Billy's sense of farce. Humour he does have, but it is a sardonic, sadistic humour, finding its gratification in the absurdity and pettiness of his father and mother and of the world with which they have surrounded him. Gratification, too, in sowing seeds of unease in others—for instance, he is often warning people that they are going bald. All through the novel, which is devoid of plot and which makes great use of repetition, trivial anecdotes and foul language to create an atmosphere of oppressive boredom, Frits van Egters is observing and recording the facts of his environment, and rejecting all the values which keep other people going. His attitude is not cynical; it amounts instead to a plain, blank disbelief in any spiritual values. We leave him crawling into bed, muttering: 'It has been seen —it has not gone unobserved.' This cryptic remark might be taken as an indication, a threat, of action to come, based on what Frits has observed. But it might just as well be an expression of impotence, observation merely being a substitute for action. However this may be, in *The Evenings* Van het Reve succeeded brilliantly in striking the mood of the young post-war generation and in creating a type of novel such as had not been written in Holland before. How great was the interest the novel aroused is shown by the fact that the magazine *Podium* devoted an entire issue to its discussion.

Reacting violently to the storm of criticism that followed upon the award conferred on *The Evenings*, to the misinterpretation of his artistic aims, Van het Reve announced that henceforward he would write in English only, and he did later produce a book of short stories, *The Acrobat*, in English, three of which appeared in *The Paris Review*. He has recently changed his mind and turned to playwriting, his first play, *Moorlands Huis* (*Moorland's House*) having won the Van der Vies prize for 1960; a second *Captain Kennedy* is awaiting production. Van het Reve is also the Dutch translator of Harold Pinter's play, *The Caretaker*, produced with great success in Holland in the autumn of 1960, and of Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* and *The Death of Bessie Smith*.

W. F. Hermans, born in 1921, is probably an even more disputed figures. The publication of any new book by him is almost certain to lead to raging controversy in Holland. But there was at least almost general agreement, when his latest novel, *De Donkere Kamer van Damocles (The Darkroom of Damocles)* appeared in 1958, that this was a masterly work and his finest book so far. Hermans made his *début* in 1946, when chapters from his first novel, *De Tranen der Acacia's (The Tears of the Acacias)*, published in 1949, began to appear in a literary periodical. This novel depicts young people adrift in the dislocated world of wartime and early post-war Holland. Through its main character, it delivers an attack on all the moral principles on which personal behaviour in our society is founded, values which Hermans sees as a pretence, a mere screen for self-seeking. His characters move in our world and yet are not of it. They have broken loose; they do not belong.

In a later novel, *Ik Heb Altijd Gelijk (I'm Always Right)*, a Dutch soldier returning home from service in In-

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donesia, where has has already proved himself a rebel, joins a new revolutionary party, grows disillusioned with it, and ends up taking a lucrative job from a person he despises.

The Darkroom of Damocles[1] is on an altogether grander scale. Many Dutch novelists are more concerned with arguing a thesis than with devising a plot, and they are rarely skilled at sustaining tension. Neither of these remarks refers to Hermans's latest novel, which tells its story in gripping fashion. It is the story of Henri Osewoudt, a miserable undersized little tobacconist, who during the German occupation works for the Dutch Resistance Movement. In this capacity he commits several crimes, including murder. He receives all his instructions from a man, Dorbeck, whose acquaintance he makes on the first day of the war, when he enters his shop as an officer in the Dutch army and asks Osewoudt to have a roll of film developed for him. There is a striking physical resemblance between Dorbeck and himself. At the end of the war, Dorbeck turns out to have been a German agent. He has disappeared and Osewoudt is mistaken for him by the Allied authorities and arrested. The second half of the book records, with mounting tension, Osewoudt's endeavours while in prison to convince his captors that he is not Dorbeck but has worked all through the war for their cause. In the environment of post-war disruption and devastation, with witnesses missing or dead and all traces lost, Osewoudt's increasingly desperate endeavours are in vain. At last he remembers that he had taken a photograph of himself and Dorbeck standing side by side in front of a mirror. If only the camera could be traced, for the film was left inside it, he could prove beyond all doubt that Dorbeck existed and that he himself was not the man the Allied authorities are after. These authorities succeed in tracing the camera and Osewoudt is allowed to develop the film himself in the prison, while they wait. When it is ready, he takes it out of the bath and holds it up to the light. The exposure showing himself and Dorbeck is a blank. In a state of delirium, Osewoudt wanders out of the prison and is shot down by a guard.

It is a bitter, cynical story. But well told though it is, the point of the novel lies in its symbolic meaning. Though convincingly portrayed, even the characters are symbols for Hermans's various social targets . . . the shabby tastelessness of the lower middle-class scene, for socialist sentimentality, for military fatuity, for the ineffectualness of the Roman Catholic Church (a powerful political force in Dutch life). For instance, in the novel's very last words Hermans writes that the Catholic priest attending Osewoudt has insufficient fingers on his two hands to staunch all the bullet wounds in the dying man's body.

In this book once again Hermans is attacking the concepts of the hero and the unreal distinction we make between innocence and guilt. In the following passage from the novel the argument is illogical and perverse, but it illustrates Hermans's vehemence. It is typical of him that he should put these words into the mouth of an ill-advised youth of eighteen, who had assisted the Germans in the last days of the war and who is now imprisoned with Osewoudt. During

[1] Messrs Heinemann have announced the forthcoming appearance of an English translation by Roy Edwards.

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a break in a period of exercise, this youth comes and sits at Osewoudt's side, and this is what he says:

'D'you know what it all boils down to? It all boils down to this: that man is mortal but doesn't want to admit it. But once a man realizes he's got to die some day, morals, absolute morals, just can't exist any longer. To such a man goodness and mercy are simply disguises for fear. Why should I behave morally, if I know I'm sentenced to death anyway? Everyone gets the death penalty one day, and everyone knows it, too. The muddle-headed philosophers who built our western civilization thought there was a difference between guilt and innocence. But what I say is that in a world where everybody gets the death penalty, there can be no difference between innocence and guilt. And as for mercy! You've never read a decent book in your life either, have you? The same as all the other nitwits in our country. But if you get the chance you just read Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Now Shakespeare, there was a man who knew what's what. What happens when Richard's kingdom is about to collapse and he's on the point of fighting the decisive battle?

'He's asleep and in his dream appear all the friends and relations he's murdered in order to get to the throne. Do you know what they say to him? What d'you think they say? D'you think they say, Richard, it was a mean thing to do, to murder us, but there's nothing that can be done about it now. We can't return to life. And so we forgive you for what you have done to us and we hope you'll be spared our miserable fate, for even if you were punished for your crimes, it wouldn't help us. . . . D'you think they say that? No, my dear chap, they don't say that! *Despair, and die!* they say. That's what they say. *Despair and die!* Women, children and greybeards. *Despair, and die!* they say. Shakespeare knew!'

It is a far cry from this to the buffoonery of Jim Dixon, Charles Lumley and Billy Fisher. Dutch writers, however, have no great comic tradition behind them, comparable to the eighteenth-century English novel. Indeed, it is characteristic of the Dutch mind to take serious matters seriously, to seal off humour and committed art in strictly watertight compartments. It is a far cry, too, from Hermans to the ranting of Jimmy Porter or the parlour pessimism of an Archie Rice. The moods of the young Dutch writers are blacker than those of their British counterparts for, unlike them, they have lived, as youths, through the violence and disruption of five years of enemy occupation. Their wounds are different and deeper and will not heal to order. But whether this is, in the long run, an advantage or a disability where writing is concerned is another matter.

REX WARNER

MILTON'S GOD by William Empson. *(Chatto and Windus. 30s.)*

Mr Empson's book on Milton is bright, witty and exasperating. It is exasperating because for most of the time what is being discussed is not Milton's God at all, but Mr Empson's. And this is sad because the beginning of the book was

MURIEL SPARK

THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE

Oh, crikey! *Another* book about the 'thirties. All those barricades. Isherwood, Auden, Spain, Hitler, hunger-marchers. All that awareness. Oh, well. . .

BUT, according to Muriel Spark there was really quite a lot going on (particularly in Edinburgh) during the 'thirties while Mr Norris was changing trains and England's Conscience was on the road to Wigan Pier.

For instance, while literary finger-nails were being bitten down to the moral quick over Franco, there was a bitter struggle for power going on in the Commonroom of the Marcia Blaine School for Girls, Edinburgh; while the "Cliveden set" was becoming pretty unpopular in left-wing circles, the members of the "Brodie set" were becoming famous in the school for their various and specialized talents; and while Hitler was rising to power, Miss Jean Brodie, schoolmistress extra-ordinary, was entering her prime, to the delight of her pupils, the consternation of her enemies and the unadulterated (sic) pleasure of her admirers.

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very promising. In his first chapter, Mr Empson leads us to believe that he will refute those whom he calls the 'neo-Christian' critics (such as C. S. Lewis). These, he claims, have failed to justify the works of Milton in a theological sense. Mr Empson himself tends rather to the position held by Shelley, but as his argument proceeds he seems to fall into rather too many types of ambiguity.

It is difficult, for instance, to see at first quite whom or what he is attacking. The 'neo-Christians'? Yes, in a way. But though he delivers some telling blows, he is on the whole just and generous to them. Milton himself? No. Milton writes 'frightfully well' and, appreciating this, Empson makes tremendously ingenious efforts to bring Milton very slightly into line with Empson. In the end it appears plainly that Empson's chief enemy is Christianity (or Empson's idea of it); and on this subject he writes with skill and with enthusiasm. 'The Christian God the father, the God of Tertullian, Augustine and Aquinas, is the wickedest thing yet invented by the black heart of man.' (Why black, incidentally?)

All this seems quite all right, though sometimes God gets mixed up with tobacco (both deleterious and not naturally things to which one takes). And, as I have already said, many shrewd blows are struck. For example, 'Many good people still believe that support for Christianity is a public duty, however absurd it feels, because other people (though not themselves) cannot be made good without it.'

This seems to me sincere, and the argument from it, if developed, could be interesting. But Empson, until he reaches his last chapter, has got himself bogged down in Milton—not at all the protagonist in any anti-God movement.

The fact seems to be that, on certain presuppositions, the whole story of man's first disobedience and God's conduct both to man and to Satan makes no good sense and that this point is scarcely worth labouring. On these assumptions, for instance, Shelley's sentence is quite unanswerable: 'Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent, in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who, in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity but with the alleged design of exasperating him to new torments.'

And yet it remains true that Milton did genuinely attempt to justify God's ways. We may even assume that he considered that he had done so. He was both helped and handicapped by the convention of the epic and his own thorough knowledge of Homer and Virgil. It is perhaps worth pointing out that the hero of the *Iliad* behaves cruelly and spitefully and the hero of the *Aeneid* behaves like a prig. Certainly on purely moral grounds Hector is to be preferred to Achilles, just as Milton's Lucifer is to be preferred to his God. Perhaps an even more significant parallel from ancient literature is to be found in Aeschylus's Prometheus and Zeus. Here quite obviously Prometheus, rather than the supreme God, enlists our sympathy; yet we knew that he did not entirely enlist the sympathy of Aeschylus. The trilogy ended in a reconcilia-

Encounter

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tion between the rebel and the tyrant, each of whom, in the process of reconciliation, seems to have changed for the better. And in such a development there is, from a metaphysical point of view, something more profound than the straightforward enthusiastic moralism of Shelley. Any metaphysical subject demands something in the nature of allegorical treatment.

Mr Empson is also a great moralist. He hates cruelty and is 'still inclined to the theory of Bentham which was in favour when I was a student of Cambridge'. All very admirable; yet this very admirable zeal for justice and hatred of cruelty sometimes seems to prevent Mr Empson from seeing what Milton is aiming at. Milton may well have been heretical from every church but his own. On this subject, Mr Empson aptly refers to the work of Professor Sewell on the 'De Doctrina'. But, however much of a heretic Milton may have been, it would be inaccurate to describe him as 'inclined toward the theory of Bentham'. He meant something by God, and, in spite of all difficulties, would not admit that God was evil. I think Mr Empson makes out a good case against some of the 'neo-Christians' who insist that Milton's story, taken literally, makes perfect sense; but he goes too far when he suggests that it makes no sense at all, or else is wholly evil. Here, strangely, he appears to be judging poetry as though it were prose—a fact that comes out sometimes in a certain vulgarity of writing. In writing of Samson and Delilah, for instance, it may be possible to describe Samson as 'a dangerous lunatic' but one can hardly view him as 'a half-comic figure'. And in commenting on the line:

> But fondly overcome with female charm

it does not help much to say '*Female charm* need not mean that Eve leered at Adam and waggled her hips.'

These are minor points, but they suggest that Empson is not seeing Milton very plainly.

ALAN ROSS

Backwards and Forwards

'Modern interest in primitive, archaic and prehistoric art no doubt reflects a certain weariness of mechanized civilization and its excessive intellectualism.' Thus, flatly and somewhat misleadingly, Mr Bihalji-Merin begins the introductory essay to his lavishly illustrated book.[1] Quoting Gauguin, 'Sometimes I went back very far, further than the horses of the Parthenon . . . to the wooden rocking horse of my childhood', he establishes him as the outrider, whose 'myth of the exotic utopia' as formulated in his book *Noa Noa*, regenerated interest in primitive art, with its simple directness as a necessary source of stimulation. Quickly qualifying the ambiguity of this, Mr Bihalji-Merin distinguishes the successive stages of influence by negro sculpture on sophisticated painters, and the appearance of a naïve or popular art created by contemporary innocents. On the one hand Picasso, on the other Henri Rousseau. Jung's 'vanishing collective soul, which, as in a dream, repeats over and over again the fundamental eternal elements of the human soul', applies to

[1] *Modern Primitives*, Thames & Hudson, £4 4s.

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MACMILLAN

both. It is possible to discern, as this essay does, an infinite number of gradations between the highly complex artist, apparently aware at every stage of the exact significance of his gestures on canvas, and the simple amateurs of the heart—neo-primitives or Sunday painters—who meticulously and often crudely transfer a vision no less obsessive or remarkable. The middle period of American abstract expressionism, for example, with its total liberation from the conceptual image, can hardly avoid being called 'primitive', if that term is to be allowed any universality of meaning. That it was usually carried out by trained, febrile and potentially skilled draughtsmen is another matter altogether: the result, however 'painterly' in execution, was by its nature a linear rejection of that same formality against which in language Rimbaud, for instance, rebelled. It is impossible for the genuine artist at intervals not to hate the whole business of art, in whatever media, and still more the parasitic world that lives off it or is deluded by it. A feeling that 'everything has already been done, painted, thought, written, etc.' is the strongest impulse behind most artistic suicides, whether actual or symbolic. An awareness that, historically, the individual's puny mark on canvas, his stringing together of words, merely adds to a surfeit, is what causes the abstention, permanent or temporary, in genuine or counterfeit practitioners. Rimbaud hoped to become God, in whatever fashion he envisaged him, and his early disillusion made even an African outpost preferable to the environments of compromise. Valéry, obsessed with the purity of the virgin sheet of foolscap, could only with extreme difficulty overcome his reluctance to deface it. Silence, one might wryly conclude, is the purest form of music. In their absence of scruples about this, the great lonely masters, the journeymen and the primitives, of whatever category, are united. Virtuosos like Picasso, squirrel-like in their rifling of history's storehouses, the craftsmen carrying out commissions that beginning as mere jobs end up as works rightly regarded as masterpieces, simple souls like Asilia Guillén, Grandma Moses and Ivan Generalic, altogether lack the neurotic inhibitions that make the sophisticated man turn away from it all in self-disgust. The purposes of art become irrelevant; whether they turn out to be personally therapeutic, socially necessary, or morally significant, is neither here nor there. In the end, we write or paint because we have to: as a celebration or a recompense; for money or for love; as a votive offering or as a means of protection. The bushmen rock painters in the Drakensberg mountains of Natal (who like the painters of Lascaux are odd omissions from the historical section of this essay) painted from a belief in sympathetic magic. If you wanted a woman, the necessary preliminary was to draw her; if you intended to hunt eland or rhebok, your chances of success would be increased by rapid oxidised images of your prey. It is a touching conception, and one, if re-stated, not far from the truth. For if we no longer share the illusion, we accept the relationship between art and the hunt, the dream and the future, the experience and nostalgia. In re-creating we re-live; in imagining we fulfil. 'Art is memory; memory is re-enacted desire.'

But in what, precisely, does the charm of modern primitive painting lie? You can dismiss most of it quite simply as bad, if you are so inclined, though

such a superior judgement must involve an essential narrowness of sensibility, an incuriosity about, at its simplest, the 'wild flowers' of art. One does not need to be perverse or gullible to find many of these pictures of more intrinsic interest than the modish abstractions, sheep-like in their imitativeness, dominating current internationally-mounted exhibitions. It may be true, as has been asserted, that within the abstract idiom personal and national differences are more clearly evident than ever they were before. Nevertheless, the demands of the international market have created an obsession with evolving refinements of style, little removed in impulse from the annually dating details, tailfins, double headlamps, etc., in contemporary motor cars (though, it is worth noting, these latter do not apply to the quality makes which evolve, quite indifferently, according to natural laws of their own).

The naïve painter, quite simply, stands his ground. The illustrations here, ranging from the works of the Sacred Heart Group in France, Vivin, Bombois, Bauchant, Peyronnet, through the American primitives like Hicks and Hirshfield, the Haitian Hyppolite, the Mexican Posada, to the peasant painters of Yugoslavia, Vivancos of Spain, Metelli, Viva the Italians, the British Wallis, E. Box and Scottie Wilson (but no Lowry, perhaps the outstanding primitive painter in Europe) and finally Pirosmanaschwili of the USSR, all confirm an absorbed fascination with reality, remembered, hankered after, or created through juxtaposition in new dimensions. The Yugoslavs, for example, with their agricultural workers and fishermen may be producing an art that is socially valuable in an obvious way, but they reveal at the same time the eyes' genuine fondness for what they alight on. The lords of the jungle meekly invading domesticity, as in E. Box's reversal of Rousseau, Bombois' weightlifters and heavy-thighed nudes, tattoo-like in their permanence, distorted as Brandt's antique camera-eye view of them. Vivin's quaysides and wild boar hunters, Rousseau's 'Ballplayers', jungle and country weddings, Meijer's 'Cow shelter', Nikifor's 'Railroad Tunnel', Metelli's 'My Departure for Military Service'—these are pictures which make use, in much the same way, of the bushman's sympathetic magic, his delight in recording. Gypsies, portlife, trains, farmyards, weddings, forests, simple biblical episodes, the circus, women, cattle and flowers, go to make up a world in which everything, however bizarre, is considered and has its place. That perhaps is the clue. Literary painting it may be, crude nearly always, but by it we are restored, as by little else in contemporary art, to a basic awareness of the environment and rituals that in the end absolve us from capitulation.

It is of some interest, as far as defining the primitive is concerned, that Sir Kenneth Clark should regard the *douanier* (with Benjamin Britten) as Sidney Nolan's closest familiar. The sumptuous volume, devised by Bryan Robertson, now devoted to Nolan's work,[1] reflects various aspects of one of the few genuine image-makers (with Bacon and Vaughan) still around. 'Although Nolan is a born painter,' Sir Kenneth writes, 'he is not at all an exponent of what French amateurs used to call *la bonne peinture*; that is to say, he does not treat oil paints as a virtuoso pianist treats the piano, as the one and only instrument which with infinite

[1] Thames & Hudson, 70s.

patience can be coaxed into yielding precious qualities at variance with its character. On the contrary, he treats his medium with a certain impatience, and uses any means to secure his meaning.' Meaning? This, in terms of *avant-garde* criticism, preoccupied with texture, has almost a reactionary ring about it. Yet Nolan, despite the poster-like quality of some of his bigger canvases, has curiously, as far as the critics go, got away with it. Have those rigid devotees of the self-sufficient painterly gesture, unrelated to natural forms, let alone to figurative or conceptual images, been stunned by Nolan's sleight-of-hand skill, his disarming cake-eating? For Nolan, despite the move to comparative abstraction in his latest group of Leda paintings, remains one of the dwindling number of important painters concerned, however ambiguously, with something over and above what organized paint alone can communicate. The particularly Australian quality of Nolan's painting is one thing ('His figures levitate with surprising ease; his dehydrated horses are so light that a man can pick one up . . . the forms of gravity are continually defied by flying foxes and bounding kangaroos')—as Sir Kenneth Clark says, 'He has extracted its essences: the red desert, the dead animals, the stranded, ridiculous towns.' His search for an applicable and significant myth—Kelly, Mrs Fraser and Bracefell, Burke and Wills, Gallipoli, Leda and the Swan—is another; his appropriation of landscape, Wimmera, the Queensland rain forests, Greece, for private purposes, is a third. 'To a certain extent, most of Nolan's work is both recapitulatory and organic in the sense that the several strands of idea and visual concept in his various groups of paintings are progressively gathered together and combined in fresh juxtapositions.' By which, Bryan Robertson means that within any one myth, or landscape, be it Greek or Australian, lie the seeds of the others. Fleming, discovering penicillin in the same way, took advantage of what was already there. Genius is a capacity to recognize such flukes, and Nolan's 'inspired pictorial opportunism', in Robertson's phrase, puts paint itself firmly in its place.

It is instructive, after the primitives and Nolan, to turn to Werner Haftmann's two-volume survey *Painting in the Twentieth Century*,[1] which, despite the lack of elegance in the writing, is a work of admirable organization, scrupulous scholarship and surprising balance. At the end of his introduction to the plates Haftmann, quoting Picasso 'I do not seek, I find', and Klee 'The artist knows a great deal, but he knows it only afterwards', observes: 'After what we have said, it seems superfluous to make humanitarian, social or religious demands on art. In a society that is essentially designed to organize, direct and gratify mass impulses, art must minister to the silent zones of man as an individual. Modern art is essentially "l'art pour l'homme" . . . it makes the individual aware of what he is in our time.'

Has art, whatever its 'superfluous' aspects, ever been anything else, ever done anything else? A case can be made out, I suppose, for almost any view of the artist's function, as he conceived it, from the Renaissance on. Do the paintings of Pollock or de Kooning or Bazaine or Burri, contribute more to the individual's self-awareness than, say, to take the least likely, those of Stubbs or Constable or Renoir or Sickert? I wonder. Haftmann's

[1] Lund Humphries, £12 12s.

brilliantly documented and illustrated pages offer some unnerving experiences. For example, a relief in wood and metal produced by Vordemberge-Gildewart in 1924 that is virtually indistinguishable from a 1960 Pasmore. Has the new movement in painting, any more than in poetry or music, done any more than elaborate the break-through made, generally, before 1914? Only in inessentials, and not at all in direction, do even the most recent of these canvases encourage one to think so.

FRANCIS WYNDHAM

A HOUSE FOR MR BISWAS by V. S. Naipaul. *(Deutsch. 21s.)*

Almost any human life, observed in its entirety from the god-like view of the novelist, reveals a gap between what it should have been and what it is. Most novels dramatize the widening of this gap: the great heroes and heroines of fiction end up tragically or comically distant from their intended destinations, and it is the quality of the writer's reply to the implied question—what went wrong?—that identifies his genius. But serious novels which chart the painful, inglorious, ultimately triumphant *narrowing* of the gap are comparatively rare, although this partial achievement is possibly the most urgent theme in humanist literature. It is treated with complete success by V. S. Naipaul in his fourth book, a novel on the grand scale. With Mohun Biswas he has created, in depth, an original character whose extreme individuality illuminates the general experience of mankind. His progress through life resembles that of someone trying to mount a descending escalator, and the small advance eventually made is as enthralling to read about—and perhaps more significant—than the steepest fall. This is encompassed by a story which at the same time establishes in all their complexity the changing customs of a sophisticated expatriate society: the Hindu community in Trinidad. Also, indirectly and almost incidentally, the novel provides one of the clearest and subtlest illustrations ever shown of the effects of colonialism.

Some readers who have enjoyed Mr Naipaul's earlier books—his two novels *The Mystic Masseur* and *The Suffrage of Elvira*, and his collection of stories *Miguel Street*—may be surprised that such grandiose claims can be made for him: these were on a deliberately smaller scale, conceived on a note of irony so perfectly controlled that he was assumed to be exclusively a 'humorous' writer. They are certainly very funny indeed, but like the best comedy they are also deeply serious. *The Suffrage of Elvira* contains a devastating and (if one reflects on it) despairing exposure of the abuses and corruption that flourish when the democratic system is first applied to a multi-racial society; Mr Naipaul's air of detachment and gaiety of manner seem to have blinded many to the relevant and unwelcome message that they in fact convey. (When reviewers were not lumping him together with totally dissimilar writers who happened also to come from the West Indies, they compared him to such wildly inappropriate names as Damon Runyon and Ronald Firbank!). And for those who want to find it, there is social history in *Miguel Street*, which reflects the gradual transition of Port of Spain from a pre-war backwater to the

booming city of today; and also, in several of the episodes, a vein of pathos, almost a sense of tragedy, never obtrusive because expressed with delicate restraint. These books, and *The Mystic Masseur*, have often been described as satires, with the accompanying suggestion of heartlessness and exaggeration. In fact, Mr Naipaul never distorts reality: he acknowledges the farcical aspects of West Indian life but these are played down rather than heightened in his work, and it is only because he avoids the turgid pomposity of one school of Caribbean literature, the sex-cum-race sensationalism of another, and the self-consciously whimsical charm of a third, that his sober respect for truth has been mistakenly interpreted as high-spirited caricature.

Compared to *A House for Mr Biswas*, however, these earlier, slighter books are seen to be lacking in depth: they take their place as vivid, two-dimensional sketches for this major work. Yet Mr Naipaul has managed the gain in profundity without losing his admirably light touch; the new novel has an ambitious theme and an intricate construction, while introducing a host of diverse characters all of whom have been exactly realized, but it has none of the wordy clumsiness associated with those fat, panoramic, pretentious volumes that form part of a trilogy, or a quartet, or a saga. The writing is as spare, the narrative pace as speedy, the detail as essential and the dialogue as apt, as in his shorter work; he has succeeded in filling an unusually large frame without sacrificing the *finesse* of the miniaturist's technique.

The birth of Mohun Biswas, and the death of his father which shortly follows it, contain those elements of mingled tragedy and farce that are to accompany him through life. The son of a labourer, but of the Brahmin caste, he later marries into the formidable Tulsi family —a self-contained matriarchal community with its own transplanted laws and superstitions, its own complex hierarchy and subtly shifting balance of power. With his wife Shama, their son Anand and three daughters, he establishes a small, discontented unit within this large and comparatively powerful termitary. Among other things, this is a study of *dependence*: Mohun is dependent on the acquisitive Tulsis, themselves neurotically unified by the fact of belonging to a minority group within a society that is itself dependent—a colony. And allied to dependence, is the theme of dignity. Humiliation attaches itself early to Mr Biswas and never leaves him; he literally wears himself out in the effort of countering a series of frustrations, petty in isolation but deadly in constant succession: yet with his peculiar self-knowledge, his aggressive wit and a hard core of stubborn confidence, he succeeds in absorbing the persistent indignities of his circumstances into his own personality, which eventually assumes a stature that gives dignity to the whole sad, silly struggle. This is concentrated in his desire for a house of his own—a desire fulfilled only at the end of his life. As one reads, one gradually shares his obsession; and throughout the book, details of masonry, of structure and decoration, are provided with loving and fascinated care, for in a doubly dependent society a house becomes a potent symbol of personal independence and thus an affirmation of human dignity. The theme is stated early in the novel, in the last paragraph of the Prologue, which looks

forward to the house that Mr Biswas finally owns.

> How terrible it would have been, at this time, to be without it: to have died among the Tulsis, amid the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family; to have left Shama and the children among them, in one room; worse, to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated.

Too much should not be made of the novel's exotic background. Mr Naipaul does not insist on quaint information regarding the manners of Hindu family life. He allows the West Indian scene to come alive for us, unsimplified and understandable, through the people he describes. For his greatest gift is the ability to create character. This is today an almost suspect talent: for years novelists have explored consciousness, have tried to establish what is it like being a person rather than what a person is like, and the desire fully to realize a character's possibilities has resulted in an emphasis on everything in human personality that is tentative and indefinite. An objective view of a character, defining its limitations, often seems arbitrary; positive, definite characters have been relegated to the world of satire, where arbitrary treatment is expected.

A House for Mr Biswas is far from being a satire: Mr Naipaul loves his characters, and his treatment of them is not arbitrary although their limitations are defined. His ability to create character includes the rarer ability to convey the interaction between characters, the relativity of 'personal relations'. This over-worked phrase suggests a self-consciously subtle study of sexual intrigue against a vaguely leisured background; here the personal relations have little to do with sex and the background is a society where whole families sleep in one room. Among other things, Mr Naipaul examines the ways in which lack of privacy can either modify character to a point where the individual is absorbed by the group, or irritate it to a point where it sharpens into eccentricity. Thus we have the life-size and unforgettable personalities of Mr Biswas himself, of Mrs Tulsi with her oblique bullying, conventional martyrdom and gentle autocracy, of many subsidiary characters drawn with equally strong strokes; and also a surrounding, competitive chorus of gossiping aunts and bickering children, some of whom are distinguished by a single attribute, the survival in legend of something they once said or did. But the dominant characters are never static: they alter in fact, and also they seem to change with the shifting standpoint from which Mr Biswas sees them. Mrs Tulsi's stature perceptibly diminishes as expatriate traditions disappear with Trinidad's development. (Trinidad is, after all, much nearer to the United States than to India: sons grow up, go to England, come back talking about Russell, Laski and Joad.) Mr Biswas differs in his relationships with Bipti, his self-effacing mother, with his executive aunt Tara, and with each of his children. His married life with Shamoma is the most finely realized relationship of all: the gradual development from remote hostility and resentment to the loyalty that comes with intimacy is established by means that defy analysis.

The people in this novel have that reality which can only be achieved by a writer whose search for truth is accom-

anied by love. It is strange that the wit f Mr Naipaul's phrasing, and the legance of his style, should suggest motional detachment. The surprising armony between the gravity of what s expressed and the delicacy of its expression results in a clear-sighted sinerity, where the harshness of objective bservation is tempered by the indulence of subjective experience and the uthor's researches into life are at the ame time lucid and profound.

CHARLES OSBORNE

HE HORSEHAIR SOFA by David Hughes. *Hart-Davis. 16s.)*

VERY ADVANTAGE by John Verney. *Collins. 16s.)*

ll criticism is finally subjective, and erhaps seldom more so than when ttempting to decide whether or not a omic novel is a success. However leverly constructed and well-written it ay be, presumably it can only be said succeed if it amuses you. Fully aware hen that one man's laugh may be nother's groan of boredom, I had etter state immediately that David ughes's *The Horsehair Sofa* struck me s being extremely funny, easy to read nd, perhaps because of its comparative revity, nowhere tedious. The story is old in the first person by Marcus Gore, conventional young middle-class Engishman whose sexual experience is retty dim. He has just married, but, due s much to his mismanagement as to is state of extreme repression, the oneymoon goes wildly wrong. In his esperate attempt to find the reasons for his and to satisfy his bride in the expected manner, he becomes hopelessly and comically involved with a collection of shady characters including a sinister bogus psychiatrist who has problems of his own.

One of the difficulties in writing this kind of light novel is to keep up the pace, to sustain the interest so that one's readers are not given time to think whether or not they're still being amused. Mr Hughes has solved this particular problem by writing his novel in forty chapters, each of which is extremely short: rarely more than twelve hundred words and often as few as four or five hundred. The resultant jerkiness of design is part of the comic device as well as being expressive of Marcus's frustration.

This method of writing in short sequences has necessarily influenced Mr Hughes's prose. The economy it encourages combines with the amiable dottiness which characterizes the endearing Marcus to produce an engaging effect not unlike a slightly more grown-up P. G. Wodehouse:

> Perhaps we had read too few books. I once knew a man who took a pride in practising on unsuspecting ladies the advice put forward by authors of handbooks in respect of trial blandishments, eccentric positions and so forth. If he did not care for the result, he addressed witty letters of criticism to the publishers. He was a wise fellow, and I had been wrong to question his morals. Perhaps, on the other hand, we had expected too much from an activity which is, after all, no more than a convenient method devised by nature for reproducing the species. Anyway, whatever lay behind it, it was all a ghastly flop.

All ends happily with a consum-

matory rough and tumble in the marriage bed. And yet, as they say, a lingering doubt remains: there has been a certain lack of inevitability in Marcus's behaviour in the varied and curious situations into which he has been thrown. Willing suspension of disbelief becomes a distinct strain, and by the end of the book I was inclined to suspect he'd have been more happily and suitably married to the young Italian servant ('Giuseppe, a brutish type, with blond crew-cut hair') of whose virility he appeared to be so psychotically envious. And, to judge from a bedroom scene where Marcus's wife, Priscilla, dresses as 'a sort of neat lady Mephistopheles' and, crying, 'All right, this is how you like it, isn't it?' lashes at Marcus with a riding-crop, I'd say she had made a shrewd guess at his true nature as well.

John Verney's *Every Advantage* is a longer, more complex and leisurely affair A type of *roman à clef*, it is concerned with a young middle-aged publisher whose marriage (this time of some years' duration) appears to be on the rocks, and whose business isn't doing any too well either. He is engaged in writing his memoirs, ostensibly to clear up a point about his parentage, but really to keep present reality at bay.

We are given large slices of the memoirs, and in fact *Every Advantage* is really a book within a book. The character of Paul Pot, the publisher, is observed with sympathy and insight, and is so fully and roundly presented that the memoir chapters fall easily and naturally into place as the kind of thing such a person would write:

> In the nursery we possessed an old wooden gramophone with one record, providently brought from England by my mother. On one side Melba sang that she would give you the keys of heaven. On the other a baritone, whose name I forget, sang that he heard 'the angels' voices calling poor old Joe'. About heaven I had no clear mental image, associating it vaguely with a gaol, to which, even then, I knew keys were necessary. About the angels' voices calling was perfectly clear. Angels were small Indian women with black shiny hair a red spot in the centre of the forehead and a drop of gold stuck into the lobe of each ear. A diaphanous mauve sari, draped from the back of their heads, disappeared mysteriously into a sort of yellow quilted waistcoat, to reappear again, having gained opacity in its wanderings, as a complicated skirt arrangement. To catch my *ayah* undressing and thus to discover what really went on top of what was the first of many ambitions never to be realized. The prejudices formed against angels in these early years has persisted ever since.

That the problems of Pot's married life, his relationship with his son, his business difficulties should all resolve so easily when the jigsaw puzzle of his memoirs finally clicks into completion is perhaps not fully convincing. But Mr Verney catches beautifully the sense of a life lightened and made bearable by a sudden change in immaterial circumstances. His point is a subtle one, more easily felt than understood, and around it he has written a compelling and fascinating first novel.

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'Major Ludovic's State Sword' is an extract from EVELYN WAUGH's forthcoming novel, *Unconditional Surrender* (Chapman and Hall). 'Dear Sir' is the opening chapter of WILLIAM SANSOM'S *The Last Hours of Sandra Lee* (Hogarth Press). 'Rose Under Glass' forms part of ELIZABETH BERRIDGE'S novel of the same name (Heinemann). MALCOLM BRADBURY has already contributed articles to *The London Magazine* on *The Criterion* and *The English Review*. PHILIP TOYNBEE'S *Pantaloon*, of which we print the opening pages, will be published later this month by Chatto and Windus. JAMES BROCKWAY, born in Birmingham in 1916 and educated at London University, has lived in Holland since 1946, where he is English Books Critic of the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, and a broadcaster on Dutch literature for *Radio Nederland*. The reminiscences of ARTUR SCHNABEL, the distinguished Austrian pianist who died in 1951, form part of his book, *My Life and Music*, to be published shortly by Messrs Longman.

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